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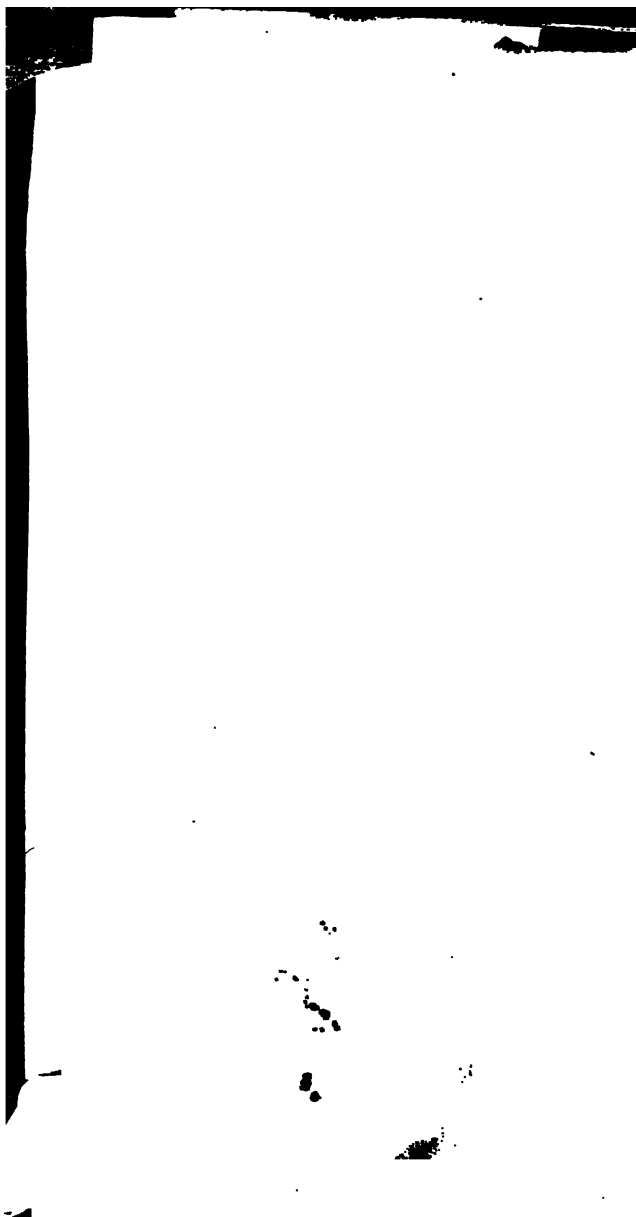


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King









THE
HISTORY
OF THE
APOSTLES CREED;

WITH
CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS

ON ITS
SEVERAL ARTICLES.

BY SIR *PETER KING*.

THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

ELIZABETH-TOWN, NEW-JERSEY :
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—1804—

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THE
PREFACE TO THE READER.

IT is well known, that several learned comments, and other tracts, have been already written on the creed, commonly called the apostles: The names of the great men, who have exercised their wits and pens on this subject, are so obvious, that the mentioning of them will be needless; so that at first view, the following essay will run the risk of being censured as superfluous and unnecessary: but whoever will consider what hath been written of this kind, will find, that most part of the writers who have gone before, have only handled the creed in a theological manner, explaining and confirming its several articles according to the various senses and interpretations deducible from holy writ; which is in no sort the design of the author in the ensuing treatise. The reader is not to expect here a perfect and complete explication of the creed, or of its several articles in their latitude and extent, according as they may be inferred, or proved from the holy scriptures; this hath been al-

P R E F A C E.

ready done with great judgment and copiousness by others, to whose endeavours the author doth not pretend to add any thing: But the author's only intent, in the following treatise, is to make an essay, towards an historical and critical account of the creed, to find out, if possible, the authors and framers of the creed, the time when the several articles were introduced, the occasion and intent of their first introducing, and what the sense, meaning and design of the first introducers were; intermixing here and there some critical observations, which may be both useful and delightful to the reader.

To this end the author hath not contented himself with reading of modern books or collections made by later writers, but hath himself had immediate recourse to the remaining monuments of the primitive ages of the church, from whence only all learning of this kind can be fetched and derived.

Whether the author hath succeeded in this attempt, must be left to others to judge; he can only say in his own excuse, that he hath done his best; and that it will be very acceptable to him to see it better done by others of more leisure, and greater abilities and learning,

P R E F A C E.

especially if any thing hit upon by him, may be of use to advance and improve this design.

If the author hath not explained every thing alledged by him to that degree of clearness and certainty, as may be expected by an inquisitive reader, or hath in any point been mistaken, it is excusable in him, not only on account of the general uncertainty of ancient and distant matters, but also on account of the affected and studied obscurity of the primitive writers in relation to this particular; so that it is not the author's fault, if at any time his proofs are not so copious or direct, as might be wished for and desired: If he had found any thing in the primitive writers to have made any such point clearer and stronger, he would not have omitted it.

If the explication given by the author, of any article or part of the creed, should happen to be disliked or not approved by any one, the reader must remember, that the author only acts the part of an historian; his design being only to collect and discover the sense and meaning of the first makers and composers of the creed, what it was that the introducers of the several articles purposed and in-

tended thereby; and, if in any place he seems to speak his own sense, that is only for the better carrying on the thread of his discourse, and in the quality and person of an historian, as having collected the sense or explication in such place mentioned, to be the intended meaning of the framers of that part or clause of the creed; the only intent of the author being to shew the sense and intended meaning of the composers of the creed, and not at all to enter into an examination of the justness or truth of such sense and meaning; the author leaving that to every man's private judgment, to be tried and determined by the holy scriptures, the only perfect and infallible rule of faith; by which even this creed itself, and every explication thereof, must be tried and judged, and is no farther to be received or believed, than as it is consonant and agreeable thereunto; which is according to the sixth article of the church of England, "that whatsoever is not read in the holy scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

T H E
H I S T O R Y
O F T H E
APOSTLES CREED, &c.

C H A P. I.

The introduction; containing several things relating to the creed in general; the encomiums given thereto by the primitive writers; the several names by which it hath been called; principally termed a symbol; two reasons commonly alledged for that appellation; the one taken from the manner of common suppers amongst the ancients, which is shewn to be weak and uncertain; the other taken from military affairs, where it denotes the watch-words and signs by which soldiers knew each other; which is affirmed not to be the full and proper signification of the word, but that it is rather to be derived from the marks and tokens used by the idolatrous Pagans in their sacred rites, called by

them symbola, which were twofold, either mute or vocal: instances of both: proved to have been secret marks or words, revealed only to those who were initiated in their mysteries, by means of which they were known to each other, and had free admission where-soever they came, to the services of those deities whose symbols they had received; and that from the same reasons, and in allusion thereunto, the creed was called a symbol by the primitive authors. A transition from the titles to the authors of the creed: some ascribe it to the apostles; which by several reasons is demonstrated to be impossible: that nevertheless it is apostolical and ancient: exceeding difficult to find out the precise framers of it: the authors thereof were many, and the composure itself a work of time: one part of the creed was used by the apostles, and left by them to their successors: the creed was always demanded at baptism both by the apostles and by those who came after them: the other part of the creed was afterwards added by the rulers of the church, in opposition to heresies, as they appeared and sprang up: in what sense the apostles are said to be the authors of one part, and the succeeding governors of the church authors of the other: the meaning of the creed to be fetched from the writing of the fathers: the

creed first constantly read in the eastern church about five hundred years after christ ; and in the western near six hundred : the creed then read was the Nicene ; into whose room afterwards came the apostles ; which is repeated.

THE great respect and veneration that hath in all ages been paid to the apostles creed, as it is usually called, may, in some measure, apologize for the writing this essay, or any other discourse about it. It would be not only tedious, but also infinite, to transcribe the encomiums that every where abound in the ancient writings of this short synopsis and compendium of the Christian faith. Saint Augustin calls it, " The illumination of the soul ; the perfection of believers, by which the bond of infidelity is dissolved, the gate of life is opened, and the glory of faith is shewn ; little indeed in words, but great in mysteries ; short so as not to oppress the memory, yet comprehensive so as to exceed the understanding : Worthily, therefore, is this creed to be attended unto, since whatsoever is prefigured in the patriarchs, declared in the scriptures, or foretold in the prophets, concerning the blessed trinity, and the mystery of our Saviour's incarnation, death and crucifixion, is contained in it." Not much unlike to which

J. Cassian writes, "that the creed comprehends in itself in few words the faith of both testaments, and the sense of the whole scripture." And Petrus Chrysologus, "that it is the entrance into life, the gate of salvation, a peculiar, innocent and pure confession, the covenant of life, the plea of salvation, and the indissoluble sacrament of faith between God and us." "This," saith Maximus Taurinensis, "is the symbol, by the sign of which the faithful are separated from the unbelieving, whose truth makes every believer of it a Christian, sanctifies the living, and reduceth the dead to life;" and many other such like noble and majestic expressions, were made use of by the primitive writers and panegyrists, to declare their esteem of this creed, which through the divine assistance I shall endeavour a little to explain.

Where, in the first place : Since the nature of things is frequently signified unto us by the names thereof, it may not be altogether unnecessary to take notice of the several titles and appellations, which have been formerly given to this creed ; by Ruffinus it is called, "the rule of preaching;" by Salvian, "the gift of salvation;" by Cassian, "the faith of the Catholic sacrament;" by Ambrose, "the seal

of our heart and a military sacrament;" by Irenæus, Tertullian, Novatian and Jerom, "the rule of faith and truth."

But that name which hath generally prevailed, and by which it is usually known, is *symbolum*, or *symbol*; for which title there are two reasons commonly given: The one is, that it is an allusion to the custom of several persons meeting together to eat of one common supper; whither every one brings something for his share to make up that common meal, which from hence was called *symbolum*, from the Greek verb *SUMBALLEIN*, which signifies to throw, or cast together; Even so, say some, the apostles met together, and each one put or threw in his article to compose this symbol; which explication of the word is, I think, first mentioned by Ruffinus, who after he has related the manner of the framing of the creed by the apostles, adds "that for many and just causes they would have it to be called a symbol; for a symbol in Greek signifies a collation, that is, that which many bring into one; for so the apostles in this creed did bring into one, or comprehend in one thing what every person thought." And after him by Cassian and several others, who affirm the same thing, "that the creed was called a symbol, because that

whatsoever is in an immense copiousness, contained in the body of the divine volumes, is by the apostles collated, or reduced into this brief compendium." But what is in general spoken by Ruffinus, Cassian, and others concerning the mutual framing of the creed by the apostles, is more particularly related by one who passes under the name of St. Austin, and probably lived not long after him, who besides what was affirmed by the foregoing authors, shews also the particular articles that were thrown or put into this common confession by each individual apostle, which I shall not here ennumerate, since I shall have occasion to mention them elsewhere in this chapter.

But now as to the truth of this sense of the word; in my opinion it is very much to be questioned: to evidence the weakness whereof, I shall not insist on that criticism, that it is not symbolum, but symbola, which hath the forementioned signification; but leaving that nicety to the grammarians, I shall only observe, that this interpretation of the word hath its entire foundation on that opinion, that the apostles were the real authors of the creed, and that they assembled together by their mutual consent to compose and frame it: Now

that the apostles did not so, neither could the creed in any manner or way be formed by them, I shall in the ensuing part of this chapter demonstrate, craving the reader's leave to take it for granted till I come thither, and his permission to dismiss this exposition of the word upon that account, as groundless and unsatisfactory.

The second signification of this word *symbolum*, is fetched from military affairs, where it is used to denote those marks, signs, watch-words, and the like, whereby the soldiers of an army distinguished and knew each other : in like manner, say some, by this creed the true soldiers of Jesus Christ were differenced from all others, and discerned from them, who were only false and hypocritical pretenders ; unto which opinion Maximus Taurinensis seems to incline, who terms " the symbol, the sign by which believers are separated from unbelievers." And Ruffinus more largely writes, " that the Greek word *sumbolon*, may be rendered in latin by *indicium* ; which word signifies a sign or a mark of distinction, and was applied to the creed, because at that time, as it is related by St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, many of the circumcised Jews feigned themselves to be the apostles of Christ, and

for the sake of their purse or belly went forth to preach, naming indeed the name of Christ, but not according to the perfect lines of tradition: to remedy which mischief, the apostles appointed this sign or token, by which he might be known, who should truly preach Christ according to the apostolic rules, as the custom is reported to be in civil wars, where their arms, language, methods, and manner of fighting being the same, to prevent any deceit every general gives the word to his soldiers, which is called *symbolum*, that if one should meet another concerning whom he doubts, by declaring the word, or the symbol, he might shew whether he was a friend or a foe." So that the creed in this respect was called *symbolum*, in allusion to a military custom; that as soldiers were known by signs, tokens, words, and the like, so true and real Christians were evidenced and distinguished from all others by this mark or symbol of the creed,

Now, though this may be in part the sense of the word, yet I do not apprehend, that it comes up to the full intent thereof; neither do I think, that it is to be derived from a military custom, but rather from some thing, which in its own nature is more correspondent and agreeable to the worship and service of God, wherein the creed is used: wherefore,

in my opinion, the signification of the word is more naturally to be fetched from the sacra, or religious services of the heathens, (if idolatry, impurity, and inhumanity may be permitted to pass under that name) where those, who were initiated in their mysteries, and admitted to the knowledge of their peculiar services, which were hidden and concealed from the greatest part of the idolatrous multitude, had certain signs or marks, called symbols, delivered unto them, by which they mutually knew each other, and upon the declaring of them, were without scruple admitted in any temple to the secret worship and rites of that God, whose symbols they had received.

These symbols were of two sorts; either mute or vocal: of the mute there are the names of several in Clemens Alexandrinus, as an "Origanum, (a musical instrument so called) a candle, a sword," and something else, not fit to be translated, were the symbols of Themis; and the said father mentions in the same place, "an handful of salt, ivy, poppy, &c." to have been the symbols of Bacchus, and of others of their brutish deities.

These symbols were carefully preserved, and kept from all public view by the receivers of them, who, upon the producing of them to

the priests of those Gods, whose signs they were, had free admission to their most hidden and abominable rites.

Apuleius, the famous Platonick philosopher of Madaura, made use of these mute symbols, to defend himself from the imputation of magic; for being "suspected of that infernal practice, because he kept some unknown things wrapt up in a napkin, or fine linen cloth," he replies thereunto, "That he had been initiated in most of the Grecian mysteries, that he diligently preserved those signs, and monuments, which were delivered him by the priests, that this was no unusual or unknown thing that some who were present, and had been initiated with him in the rites of Bacchus, did well know what they kept hidden at home, and did in secret, without the company of the profane, particularly reverent:" "That it could not seem strange to any who had the least sense of religion, that a man who had been privy to so many mysteries of the Gods should keep some tokens thereof at home, and wrap them up in linen, which is the purest covering for divine things: That yet he did profess with a loud voice, that if by chance any one was present, who had been partaker with him in the same solemnities; if he would give the sign, he should hear

what those things were, which he so carefully preserved, but that otherwise he would not be compelled by any danger whatsoever, to divulge those things to the profane, which he received to keep secret and conceal."

But, besides these mute symbols, there were others also which were vocal, that is, a certain form of obscure and mysterious words, for the most part, if not always, agreeable to the worship, actions, or nature of that God, whose signs they were; delivered by the priests to those who were initiated in their mysteries, by which those who were thus consecrated, mutually knew each other, and were freely admitted to the most reserved and secret parts of their sacred rites and ceremonies: Such a vocal symbol, Apuleius seems to hint at in the precedent quotation, where he requires, that "if any were present, who had participated with him in the same solemnities, they should give the sign;" that is, they should pronounce and express those words; which were the mark and token of their initiation and consecration. But, there is no need to look any farther into the writings of the heathens for the proof of this point, seeing there is a full and large evidence thereof in Arnobius, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Julius Firmicus Maternus, who have recorded several of their

filthy, senseless, and inhumane symbols ; as for example, Arnobius relates this to be the symbol of Ceres, “ and to have been repeated at the initiation in her rites, I have fasted and I have drunk a caudle, (as I chuse to translate the word cyceon, which signifies a mixed and confused portion of liquors) I have taken out of the chest, and put into the basket, I have taken it out again, and put it into the little chest ;” which is thus mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus, with some small variation, ‘ I have fasted, I have drunk a caudle ; having done that, I put it into the basket, and from the basket into the chest.” To explain which symbol at large, would perhaps be too tedious ; I am almost confident that it would be too obscene and filthy, and that the cleanest words by which it can be expressed in our English dialect, will sound too harsh in chaste and modest ears : wherefore I shall refer those who would exactly know the mystery thereof, to the fifth book of Arnobius, from page 170 to page 176, and to the tenth page of Clemens Alexandrinus’s *Protrepticon ad Gentes*. I shall only say this in general, as being pertinent to my present undertaking, that these symbolical words had a dark and enigmatical reference to the secret and hidden rites of Ceres, and did in obscure expressions,

shadow forth her impudent, bestial, and abominable actions, which in those detestable mysteries were solemnized and commemorated; and, that whosoever declared or pronounced these words, had an immediate admission to those secret and reserved villanies, as they justly deserve to be termed.

There are yet several other symbols mentioned both by Arnobius, and Clemens Alexandrinus; which to prevent too great a length, I shall omit, and confine myself to some mentioned by Julius Firmicus Maternus, who, in his most excellent discourse concerning the error of profane religions, after he hath shewn the brutishness, stupidity, and folly of the heathens, in worshipping such filthy, villainous, and barbarous deities, and in rendering to them such cruel, unclean and abominable services, as they did, proceeds to speak particularly to the symbols, or marks used amongst the more devout and zealous adorers of those black and murtherous Gods; the first whereof is "one used in a certain temple, that when a dying man was desirous to be admitted into the innermost parts thereof, he was to repeat this obscure and dark sentence, I have eaten of a taber, I have drunk of a cymbal, I have learned the secret of religion;" which symbol is also mentioned by Clemens Alexandrinus, & with a small difference thus recorded by him, "I have eaten

of a taber, I have drunk of a cymbal, I have danced with a cup in mine hand, I have entered into the marriage bed. Which said father sufficiently intimates to us, that this symbol was used in the famous services of the Phrygians to Cybele the mother of the gods; the words and expressions whereof have a relation to the taber and cymbal which she invented, to the mad and brutish way of her worshippers adoring of her, and to those abominable and horrid deeds, which in those diabolical rites they celebrated and admired.

The symbol used by the more devout and secret votaries of Mithras, the great and renowned god of the Persians, was *Theos e Petras* god of a rock, which was taken from the manner of the generation, or production of the said god, which as Jastin Martyr, and Jerom do both assure us, the Pagan Mythologists fancied to have been by the alone heat of lust from a stone or rock.

The symbol employed in the Orgia, or revel of Bacchus, was *ELILIKERES*, *DIMORPHEI*, or rather *HELIXOKERES*, *DIMORPHE*, having crooked horns, double faced; because, under such representations, that drunken god was worshipped and adored.

Lastly, That I may not mention any more, the said Julius Firmicus Maternus acquaints us with this following symbol of some idolaters, "that on a certain night they placed an image upright in a bed, and then wept round about it; which when they had sufficiently done, a light was brought in: and then the priest anointed the cheeks of all those who had lamented, pronouncing with a soft murmur these words; "Be confident, ye initiated ones of the saved God, for there shall be salvation unto us from our labours."

I might yet produce several other examples of the same kind; but those already alledged, do sufficiently declare the nature of the Pagan symbols, that they were secret marks, words, or tokens, communicated at the time of initiation, or a little before, unto those who were consecrated, or entered in their reserved or hidden rites, and to none else; by the declaration, manifestation, or pronunciation whereof, those more devout idolaters knew each other, and were with all freedom and liberty of access admitted to their nocturnal and more intimate mysteries and villanies, from whence all others as profane and unworthy, were kept out, and excluded; which said symbols, those who had received them, were obliged

carefully to conceal, and not on any account whatsoever to divulge or reveal.

Now, for all these reasons, the apostles' creed was by our ancestors very fitly termed a symbol, because it was studiously concealed from the Pagan world, and not revealed to the Catechumens themselves, till just before their baptism, or initiation into the christian mysteries, when it was delivered unto them, as that secret note, mark, or token, by which the faithful in all parts of the world should interchangeably know and be known.

That the creed was carefully preserved from the knowledge of the profane, is a thing abundantly asserted by the primitive writers; St. Cyprian assures us hereof, that "the sacrament of faith, that is the creed, was not to be profaned, or divulged: for which he cites two texts of scripture; the one, Proverbs xxiii. 9. Speak not in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of thy words; and the other, Matthew vii. 6. give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rent you. St. Ambrose most pathetically exhorts to the utmost vigilancy to conceal the christian mys-

teries, and in particular, to be very " careful not by incautelousness to reveal the secrets of the creed or the Lord's prayer ;" and in several of the sermons of Petrus Chrysologus, there are frequent and earnest exhortations to preserve and hide the creed from public knowledge and observation, that the unworthy and profane might not have this secret of God with them : nay, so exact and punctual were they in this regard, that the creed was not declared to the Catechumens themselves, till they were advanced to the higher form of that order ; and being ripe and fit for baptism, were speedily by that ordinance to commence perfect members of the visible church : of which custom St. Ambrose speaks, where he writes, that " on a Lord's day, the lessons and sermons being ended, and the Catechumens of the lower rank dismissed, that then in the baptistery of the church, he delivered the symbol to some of the competentes," who were of the superior rank of the Catechumens : Consonant unto which, it is related by Ferrandus Diaconus concerning a converted negro, " that first of all, according to custom, he was a Catechumen ; and then after some time, as the east of Easter drew nigh, (which was their solemn time of baptism) he was advanced to the rank of the competentes ;" where, amongst

the other actions peculiar thereunto, this was one "that he heard, and assented to the symbol;" so that the Catechumens knew not the creed till just before their baptism, when it was delivered unto them as that private mark or sign by which the christians mutually knew each other: Unto which, it is not improbable, Cæcilius, the heathen disputant, in Minucius Felix, did blindly refer, when he, said, "that the christians knew each other by hidden notes or marks, and loved almost before they were acquainted with one another;" seeing Maximus Taurinensis affirms, "that the apostle appointed the mystery of the creed, to be a mark of distinction between believers and unbelievers, to discover both the strangers and enemies to the faith of the church, who either knew it not, or had corrupted it." So that from the whole, it seems to me most evident that the title of symbol attributed to the creed is to be derived from the symbols used in the sacra, or religious rites of the heathens; in allusion whereunto, the creed is so termed, because it was delivered unto persons at their initiation and admission by baptism into the visible church, as that secret mark and sign by which they should be known from all others, and mutually know each other.

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But, from the names of the creed, let us pass unto the creed itself; and, in the next place, enquire after the authors and composers thereof, who have for many ages successively been esteemed to have been the apostles themselves: from whence it is called the apostles creed. Now, that from the days of the apostles, there hath been used in the church a certain rule and form of faith, not much unlike to our present creed; I am so far from denying, that I shall endeavour to prove it in the ensuing discourse, from Tertullian and others of the most primitive writers: But that the apostles themselves should be the immediate authors of the creed in the present form that it now is, and that from their days it hath without any variation been inviolably transmitted down to us by tradition; this is that which is justly questionable and I doubt not but to evince the contrary.

The first, I think, who hath given us this smooth account concerning the composition of the creed, is St. Ambrose; who writes that "the twelve apostles, as skilful artificers, assembled together, and made a key by their common advice, that is the creed; by which the darkness of the devil is disclosed, that the light of christ may appear:" Or, if the sermon, in which this passage is, be not the genuine offspring of so great a man, it is not long after

his time that Ruffinus gives the same account of it, where he relates, that “ they had received by tradition from their fathers, that after the ascension of our Saviour, and the effusion of the holy ghost, before the apostles separated from each other to go into the several parts of the habitable world, to preach the gospel to them ; they settled amongst themselves the rule of their future preaching, to prevent their teaching different doctrines, during their separation, unto those whom they should invite unto the Christian faith : wherefore they assembled all together, and being full of the holy ghost, they composed the creed ; each one inserting what he thought convenient ; and ordained it to be a test of their future sermons, and a rule to be given unto the faithful.” The like is also asserted by Leo Magnus, Jerom, John Cassian, and an innumerable number of other authors ; since from the days of Ruffinus, it hath for several hundreds of years been generally believed, that the twelve apostles, before they went forth from Jerusalem, to preach the gospel, agreed on this formulary of faith to be the rule and standard of all their sermons, which without any variation should be delivered to their proselytes and converts.

But besides the opinion, that the apostles were in general the authors of the creed; some have advanced one step farther, and affirmed, that every apostle inserted his particular article; by which according to the number of the apostles, they have divided the creed into twelve articles, allowing one article for each apostle: A full account whereof is in a sermon falsely attributed to St. Austin; where the author thereof gives us this following relation, concerning each particular article that was put in by each particular apostle. "Peter," saith he, said, "I believe in God the father almighty;" John, "maker of heaven and earth;" James, "and in Jesus Christ his only son, our lord;" Andrew, "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary;" Philip, "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried;" Thomas, "he descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead;" Bartholomew, "he ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the father almighty;" Matthew, "from thence shall he come to judge the quick and the dead;" James the son of Alphaeus, "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic church;" Simon Zelotes, "the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins;" Jude the brother of James, "the resurrection

of the body;" Matthias, " life everlasting. Amen."

Now as to the truth of this tradition, I think it is altogether to be denied, and that for several reasons, as that it was nigh four hundred years after Christ, before the framing of the creed by the apostles was ever heard of; and even Ruffinus himself, one of the first reporters thereof, though in the beginning of his commentary he doth roundly assert it, yet in the midst thereof, he speaks of it doubtfully, as if its authors were uncertain, and unknown.

Moreover, had the apostles been the real formers of the creed before their dispersion from Jerusalem, it cannot be imagined, that St. Luke in his history of their acts, would have wholly omitted so considerable a fact as this: Neither can it be conceived, but that the innumerable councils and synods among the primitive Christians, or at least some of them, would in their decisions and determinations of faith and doctrine, have had some reference or other to this apostolical system, as their standard and basis, if any such there had been: whereas no such thing appears, but the contrary thenceunto; for, as they never mentioned any such creed, so as occasion offered, they composed new creeds, and even

performed one of the highest parts of the christian religion, I mean baptism, by them; at least, so they did by the Nicene creed, as in the Encyclical epistle of the emperor Basilicus, the said emperor declares, "that he, and all believers before him, were baptized into the creed of the three hundred and eighteen fathers assembled at Nice;" and the emperor Zeno, in his Henoticon, or edict of union, which he published after the expulsion of Basiliscus, strictly commanded, "that all should be baptized by the Nicene creed alone, and that no person or church should make use of any other symbol, or definition of faith;" assuring us withal, "that this same method was observed by the third general council held at Ephesus, where Nestorius was condemned." I might for the farther confirmation of this point, urge several arguments more; but it being so clear and evident, I shall only farther add, that if the apostles had really framed, and delivered to their successors this creed, every church would have agreed therein; and there would not have been so many different and diverse creeds, as we find there were; scarce two churches, I think I may safely venture to say, that not two, had exactly the same symbol without any variation or difference: "the descent into hell," as Ruffinus informs us,

"was neither in the Roman, nor Oriental creeds:" "The communion of saints" was not in any creed till above four hundred years after Christ, and then not immediately received in all: The clause of "life everlasting" was omitted in several, whilst in others it was inserted. But not to exemplify any more particulars; whosoever shall compare the Grecian, or as some may think it more fitly termed, the French creed, recorded by Irenæus; those of Carthage, cited by Tertullian; that of Aquileia, commented on by Ruffin; that of Hippo, repeated by St. Austin; that of Ravenna, extant in Petrus Chrysologus; that of Turin, explained by Maximus bishop of that church; and several other creeds here and there interspersed in the primitive writings: I say, whosoever shall compare these creeds together, shall find them vastly different; and that there are very few articles, in the order and expression whereof, they do all without exception, agree: Which consideration, with those aforementioned, sufficiently evidence, that the apostles neither were, nor could be the authors nor composers of our present creed, that passes under their name.

But though this creed be not of the apostles immediate framing, yet it may be truly styled *apostolical*, not only because it contains the

sum of the apostles doctrine, but also, because the age thereof is so great, that its birth must be fetched from the very apostolic times : It is true, the exact form of the present creed cannot pretend to be so ancient by four hundred years ; but a form not much different from it, was used long before. Irenæus, the scholar of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, where he repeats a creed not much unlike to ours, he assures us, “ that the church dispersed throughout the whole world had received this faith from the apostles and their disciples ; ” which is also affirmed by Tertullian of one of his creeds, “ that that rule of faith had been current in the church from the beginning of the gospel : and which is very observable, although there was so great a diversity of creeds, as that scarce two churches did exactly agree therein, yet the form and substance of every creed, was in a great measure the same ; so that, except there had been from the very plantation of christianity, a form of sound words, or a system of faith delivered by the first planters thereof, it is not easy to conceive, how all churches should harmonize, not only in the articles themselves, into which they were baptized, but in a great measure also, in the method and order of them.

But now the creed, or at least a great part of it, being so very ancient, and the records of

those times being withal so few, it will be difficult task to give an exact and punctual account of its certain authors, and of the precise intended meaning of every article and clause thereof; which difficulty is yet farth increased by the extraordinary care and affected studiousness of the primitive fathers to conceal the creed; which was so great and unaccountable, as that they not only kept it from the knowledge of the Heathens and Catechumens, as hath been already demonstrated, but they even scrupled to commit it to writing and rather chose to transmit it down to posterity by tradition; for which reason Ruffinus calls it "the tradition of faith;" and Jerome informs us, "that this symbol of our faith and hope delivered by the apostles, was not written in paper and ink, but in the fleshly table of the heart;" in an agreeableness whereunto Petrus Chrysologus, frequently exhorts his hearers "to preserve this gift in the most inward recesses of their hearts, not to permit vile paper to depreciate this precious gift, or black ink to darken this mystery of light: And many other such like passages might be easily produced, to evidence their strange fancy, to keep the creed secret, concealed and hidden; which together with the forementioned considerations, do clearly shew, that it is

no easy matter to give a satisfactory account of the authors and intended sense of every article thereof, and may justly excuse or lessen a mistake or defect herein.

Wherefore, having premised this observation, I shall now endeavour to give the best account I can, of the authors and framers of the creed, and of the designed meaning of the several articles thereof.

As for the authors thereof, it cannot be denied, but that they were several and many; the creed was neither the work of one man, nor of one day, but, during a long tract of time, passed successively through several hands, e'er it arrived to its present perfection; the composure of it was gradual, and not instantaneous; the manner whereof, I apprehend to have been these two ways: First, some of the articles therein were derived from the very days of the apostles: Secondly, the others were afterwards added by the primitive doctors and bishops, in opposition to gross heresies and errors that sprung up in the church.

As for the first of these, that some of the articles were of the very inserting of the apostles; this will appear if we consider, that the apostles and evangelists who were the first sent forth to preach the gospel, and to con-

vert the world both Jewish and Pagan; when they formally received any one a member into the Christian church by baptism, they did then particularly demand his assent to the Christian faith, and a declaration of his belief thereof: An example whereof we have in the eighth of the Acts; where, after the conference between the Eunuch and Philip the evangelist, when the Eunuch testified his desire to be baptized, Philip told him, "that if he did believe with all his heart, he might;" unto which, when the Eunuch replied, "that he did believe Jesus Christ to be the son of God," then Philip baptized him, but not before. From which single instance it is manifest, that the apostles and first preachers of the gospel required the assent of all persons at baptism to some of the particular articles of the Christian faith, which were the platform and model of the creed, since that time, always used at baptism. Which of the particular articles of our present creed were inserted therein by them, I shall more largely shew in their particular order, wherein they are disposed in the rule of faith; it is sufficient in this place to say, that they were the articles of the existence of God; the trinity; that Jesus was Christ, or the saviour of the world; the remission of sins; and the resurrection.

Now as for these apostolic demands, they might not always be exactly the same, nor still confined to the forementioned particulars, in every church, and at every season, they might not mention the very same particulars without either addition or diminution, but allow themselves the liberty of expression according as they saw occasion, and so in this respect they might sometimes vary and alter; although, as to the fundamentals of Christianity, that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the Messias, and the like, they never omitted them; and the form of their expression, and delivery of their confessions of faith, was generally the same, near the method and order of our present creed; for had it not been so, it is almost impossible to conceive, how all churches should so harmoniously agree in the general form and order of their respective creeds, when yet they all disagree in the words and expressions used therein.

This apostolical system professed at baptism, was not committed to writing, but observed by, or left with the governors of every church to use it on the like occasion, whose duty it was to preserve it undefiled and incorrupt, and to make it the terms of christianity: and admission to their communion; unto which, some think St. Paul might have an eye,

when he exhorted Timothy "to keep that which was committed to his trust," and "to hold fast the form of sound words:" but whether he had or no, I shall not here enquire. This is certain, that not only Timothy, but the apostolical churches, and all others who received it from them, were solicitous and careful to preserve those articles and that form of faith, which was delivered unto them by the apostles; and as the apostles, so they in imitation of their example, did always at baptism require the assent of the person to be baptized, unto the creed, or articles of the christian faith; which is a thing so universally known, as that it may seem almost needless to produce any quotations for the proof of it: Thus Ruffinus relates, that in his days, "the ancient custom was retained at Rome, for persons to be baptized, publicly to recite the creed:" and Salvian, that "at baptism the christians profest their faith in God the father almighty, and in Jesus Christ his son;" according unto which, Vigilius Tapsensis, or whosoever else was the author of those books concerning the trinity to Theophilus, extant amongst the works of Athanasius, writes, that "those who came to the sacred laver of regeneration, confessed, saying, I believe in God the father almighty, and in Jesus Christ his only son, and in the


holy ghost ;” and long before any of these Justin Martyr assures us, that “ none were baptised unless they did first declare their assent to the doctrine and faith of the gospel.”

Not long after the apostles days, and even in the apostolic age itself, several heresies sprung up in the church, subversive of the fundamentals of christianity ; to prevent the malignant effects whereof, and to hinder such heretics from an undiscernible mixing themselves with the orthodox christians, as also to establish and strengthen the true believers in the necessary truths of the christian religion, the christian verities opposite to those heresies, were inserted in the creed ; and together with those other articles, which had without any intermission been constantly used from the time of the apostles, were proposed to the assent and belief of all persons who came to be baptized: the governors of the church judging this a prudent and an effectual course, to preserve the fundamentals of religion from being undermined and overthrown by cunning and subtle heretics ; which is the second way by which the creed was composed, viz. The doctors and governors of the church did add unto those of the apostles, other articles, in opposition to gross and fundamental heresies

and errors, as they appeared and grew up, as Ruffinus informs us; "that whereas it was in the beginning of the Roman creed, I believe in God the father almighty," there were some other clauses added thereto in the creeds of several churches, occasioned by certain heretics to exclude the sense of their new doctrine; as particularly in the Aquileian creed, "to the word almighty was subjoined invisible, impassible, in contradiction to the heresy of the Sabellians, or Patripassians, that the father was born of the virgin, and so became both visible and passible." But, there is no need of any farther testimonies to prove this point at present, seeing a great part of the ensuing treatise will be an abundant confirmation thereof.

I would not be here mistaken, as if I did mean, that none of those articles which were introduced into the creed, and settled there in opposition to heresies, were ever used before, or demanded at baptism by the administerer thereof: but my meaning is, that every church being at liberty to express the fundamental articles of the christian faith in that way and manner, which she saw fit *pro re nata*. or as occasion offered; it is not improbable, but that before damnable heresies sprung up, they

might not always to a tittle follow the same form of words, or exactly ask the same questions. As for example, the doctrines of the trinity, of Jesus of Nazareth's being Christ, or the Messias, of remission of sins through his name, and of the resurrection, were at the first preaching of the gospel sufficient, without a particular explication of the actions of the father, and the state of the son; as Philip only required the Eunuch to believe, that Jesus Christ was the son of God: and if at some seasons they might mention the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, and the several acts thereof, at other seasons they might omit them, and not constantly express the particulars in that order in which they are now found in the creed, till the appearance of contrary heresies gave them occasion so to do; so that when any article was added to the creed, it was not the introduction of a new point, but the vindicating and settling of an old one, and a constant perpetual profession and declaration of that truth, which before was only arbitrarily and uncertainly expressed, seeing every one, before those contrary errors arose, was supposed firmly to believe and own it. In which respect I may say of the creed as Vincentius Lirinensis doth of the canons and determina-



tions of councils, that the design of the church thereby is, “ that what was before more simply, should now more diligently be believed ; that what was more seldom, should now more frequently be preached ; and that what was more unconcernedly, should for the future be more carefully worshipped.”

By these two ways then, was the present creed framed ; part thereof was transmitted down from the apostles, and the other part thereof was afterwards added by the governors of the church, to prevent heresies from corrupting her doctrine, and heretics from infecting her members : by the which of these two ways each particular article was inserted in the creed, I shall shew in the following part of this treatise, and shall not here anticipate or forestall it.

This being then the method whereby the creed was framed ; although nothing that is contained therein, must be believed any farther than it agrees with the holy scriptures ; yet the intended sense of the greatest part thereof, is not to be fetched from thence, but from the writings of the fathers, and from those heresies against whom it was designed ; which expression may at the first hearing be perhaps, esteemed by some too hasty and in-

considerate, but the nature of the thing well reflected on, makes it evident and beyond contradiction; and if the authority of others before me, will be more valued and better received, it will be no difficult task to produce several, who have affirmed the same thing; but at present, I shall content myself with the testimony of Monsieur Juricu, a French divine now living, who writes in express terms, that for his part “ he is persuaded that we must not seek the sense of the articles of the apostles creed in the scriptures, but in the intention of those who composed it.”

This is that which I design to do, to search into the intended meaning of this compendium of faith, which hath been received in all ages with the greatest veneration and esteem: The respect and reverence that the ancients paid unto it, hath been in part already related; and in these latter times, throughout several centuries of years, so great a deference hath been rendered thereunto, as that it hath not been only used at baptism, but in every public assembly it hath been usually, if not always read, as the standard and basis of the christian faith, unto which the whole congregation hath been wont to testify their unanimous assent, by saying, *Amen*.


It is true that the primitive christians affect-

ing an unaccountable secrecy for this and their other mysteries, as it hath been already shewn, did not in their assemblies publicly recite the creed, except at the times of baptism, which besides cases of necessity, were only at Easter and Whitsontide ; from whence it comes to pass, that the constant repeating of the creed in the church was not introduced till a long time after our saviour's incarnation.

The repetition of the creed at every assembly, was appointed in the Eastern church by Timothy, archbishop of Constantinople, in the reign of the emperor Anastasius, who after having governed the empire twenty-seven years, died Anno. 521. About which time, Petrus Gnapheus, bishop of Antioch, prescribed also " the perpetual recital of the creed at the public administration of divine service ; " which before that time, as the historian observes, " was only repeated on the day immediately preceding Good Friday, when the catechisms were more solemnly performed in order to the celebration of baptism, the Easter or the Easter-Eve ensuing : " which repetition on that day was first appointed by the council of Laodicea ; the 46th canon whereof is that " those who are to be baptized, must learn the creed, and repeat it to the bishop or a presbyter the Thursday before Easter."

In the Western churches, at a synod of thirty-five bishops, held under Alaricus at Agatha or Agde, in the lower Languedoc, the ninth canon thereof ordains, that "on the Lord's day before Easter, the creed should be publicly preached in the church to the competentes or to those of the Catechumens, who being ripe for baptism, were speedily to be admitted thereunto;" but the general and constant reading thereof, seems not to have prevailed in the West, till almost five hundred and ninety years after Christ; when, in imitation of the Eastern churches, the third council of Toledo, by the "petition of K. Recared, ordered, that throughout all the churches both of Spain and Galicia, the creed should be repeated with a loud voice every Lord's day, that so the true faith might be manifested and assented to, and the hearts of the people being purified by faith, they might be prepared to partake of the body and blood of Christ."

It must indeed be owned, that the creed appointed to be read in the church, both by Timothy, archbishop of Constantinople, and the third council of Toledo, was the Nicene or Constantinopolitan creed; which for that time, through some reasons pecaliar to that age, did in some measure eclipse the apostles creed, although this latter did in a little time



recover its former esteem and value, and for several ages hath, next to the holy scriptures, been always reputed the most venerable and divine extant; and whilst all other creeds, excepting the Nicene, and that commonly ascribed to Athanasius, have perished as to their use, with their very birth and framing, this hath outlived them all, and for several hundred years hath been uninterruptedly used, and even before those two other creeds, it hath been perpetually and constantly preferred.

Such a peculiar honor hath almighty God been pleased in his most wise providence, to put upon this particular creed: To the explication of the several articles whereof, I shall forthwith proceed; first repeating the creed itself, which is to be the subject of the ensuing discourse, and is as follows:

"I believe in God the father almighty maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the holy ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead, he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the father almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the

holy ghost, the holy Catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

C H A P. II.

The reason for which it is said in the singular number, I believe; the meaning of the word believe: by believing in God, we assent to his existence, and unity; the Greek and ancient Latin creeds read, I believe in ONE God, which was designed against some blasphemous deniers of the divine unity, who negatively were not the Jews since they own it: nor the heathens principally, seeing the greater, or at least the wiser part of them acknowledged it: but positively, they were certain ancient heretics; in opposition unto whom, this clause of ONE God is to be considered, either absolutely or relatively; absolutely it signifies, that there is but ONE God; the Valentinians, Cerdonians, Marcionites, and others, introduced several Gods; the reason for which they did it; the authors of this heresy lived in the apostles time; against it the creed declares, that we must believe in ONE God; which being understood relatively, or as it hath reference to what immediately follows in the creed, signifies that ONE and the same God is the father almighty maker of heaven and earth, in contradiction to several heretics, who maintain-

ed opinions contrary thereunto; the title FATHER, denotes God to be the origin of all beings, in contradiction to the Gnosticks, and others, who being worse than the heathens, disowned him to be such, and refused to give him the appellation of FATHER, which is here briefly explained, but attributed it to another being, different from him: or, it denotes the peculiar relation of the father unto the son, in which sense it hath been also understood in the creed, which is the primary sense thereof, wherein it hath been in the creed from the foundation of christianity. The proper notion of the word ALMIGHTY; it hath a threefold signification in the creed: First, It denotes God's infinite power, which shews the reason why it is placed before the making of heaven and earth; in this sense it was attended against the Valentinians, Simonians, Menandrians, &c. whose heresies are explained: Secondly, It implies God's providential government of the world, in opposition to the denial thereof by the Gnosticks and Marcionites; the former of whom at least, ascribed this word ALMIGHTY, thus understood, to another being, diverse from the supreme and only God; the reason of their blasphemies against the divine providence: Thirdly, It includes God's immensity and omnipresence, in contradiction to the error of the Gnosticks, which confined God within a certain limited space. What is to be understood by MAKER, and what by HEAVEN and EARTH; the blasphemous tenets of several heretics about the creation of the

world; Simon Magus, and several others, attributed the making thereof to angels; the portentous system of the Valentinians, concerning the origin of beings, and the creation of the universe; the Cerdonians and Marcionites maintained two eternal principles, God and the devil, the latter of whom they affirmed to have been the former and maker of the world: against all these heretics it was inserted in the creed, that the supreme God, the father almighty, is maker of heaven and earth.

THE first words at the head of the creed, which must be supposed to be of like force with respect to every article and clause therein, are *I believe*; wherein are two things observable: the first whereof is, the number, wherein the word *believe* is expressed; which is not the plural, *we believe*, but the singular, *I believe*; which came from the manner of the Catechumens repeating the creed, or at least yielding their assent unto it at baptism, which they did severally and apart; or, if for convenience sake, many might recite or assent unto the creed together, yet each one to declare his proper personal belief thereof, said *I believe*; so writes Salvian, "at baptism thou didst not only renounce the devil and all his works, but thou saidst, I believe in God the father almighty, and in Jesus Christ his son;"

and to the same purpose it is related by Vigilius Tapsensis, that "those who came to the sacred laver of regeneration confessed thus, "I believe in God the father almighty and in Jesus Christ his only son, and in the holy ghost:" it being most fit and proper, that every person at his admission into the christian church, should make a particular and personal declaration of his faith and belief.

But there is further observable in these two words, the act mentioned or specified therein, viz. Believing; which, that I may avoid all needless and impertinent criticisms, I do in brief apprehend to signify in this place no other, than the full and undoubted assent of our mind and understanding to the truth and verity of every particular clause and article contained in this creed or symbol,

The first whereof is, that we believe *in God*, which worthily deserves to be placed in the beginning of the creed; since, according to the observation of Origen, "a fitting apprehension and faith of God is the basis and foundation of all virtues." In which expression there are contained these two things, the existence of God, and the unity of the godhead. That the existence and being of God is here first of all professed, is no wonder,

since on it our whole religion depends; this is the foundation of every thing that is sacred; without it religion would be a mere fancy and conceit, the most foolish and unreasonable thing in the world: "He therefore", saith the apostle, "that cometh unto God, must believe that he is;" that is, must be fully persuaded in his mind, that there is a God; and not only yield a naked assent to the certainty of his being and entity, but apprehend him under due and congruous notions to his nature and essence, "as the first cause and foundation of all things, infinite, unbegotten, immortal, perpetual, only, whom no bodily shape can describe, or circumspection determine, without quantity or quality, disposition, motion or habit;" as Ruffinus writes in his exposition of this article, "When thou hearest," saith he, "the word GOD, understand a substance without beginning, and without end, simple, without mixture, invisible, incorporeal; to whom nothing is adjoined, in whom nothing is created, without author, for he himself is the author of all.

But, the existence of God having been in all ages universally acknowledged, without any considerable opposition thereunto, the unity of the godhead hath been more generally inculcated as the chiefest and more principle sense of this article; for the better understand-

ing of which, it will be convenient to take notice of the observation of Ruffinus, "that in all the Eastern creeds, it is, I believe in *one* God the father;" where, if by the Eastern he means the Nicene, or Constantinopolitan, it is certainly true; or, if he means the ancient creeds used before either of those, it is true not only of the Eastern, but of the Western also; for in all the most primitive creeds, whether Latin or Greek, this article runs, "I believe in one God," or, "in the only God;" as in the two creeds of Irenæus, and three of Origen's, *Hena Theon*, one God; and in three of Tertullian's, *Unum*, or, *Unicum*, *Deum*, one, or the only God; and whosoever shall with any observation consider the writings of the most ancient fathers, and especially of Irenæus, shall find, that there was a peculiar force and energy couched in this expression of *one God*, in contradiction to the wretched notions and tenets of some men, whereby they opposed and blasphemed this fundamental point of the Christian religion, the unity of the divine essence.

As for the persons who were condemned by this clause, it will be readily granted, that they were not the Jews, seeing the unity of the godhead is every where inculcated in the Mosaical law, and the body of that people

have been so immovably fixed and confirmed in the belief thereof, that now throughout their sixteen hundred years captivity and dispersion, they have never quitted or deserted his principle, that God is One, as is evident from their thirteen articles of faith, composed by Maimonides, “the second whereof is the unity of the blessed God;” which is there explained to be in such a peculiar and transcendent manner, as that nothing like it can be found, and in their liturgy, according to the use of the Sepharadim, or the Spaniards, which is read in these parts of the world in their synagogues; in the very first hymn, according to the edition of David Di Krasto Tartas, printed at Amsterdam, Anno 422, of their little computation, which falls in with Anno Christi 1662; or, as it is in a larger edition by Emanuel Benvenisti, at Amsterdam, Anno Christi 1642, in the second hymn, which is an admiring declaration of the excellencies of the divine nature; the repeated chorus of that hymn is, “All creatures both above and below, testify and witness all of them as one, that the Lord is one, and his name One.”

And as this assertion of the divine unity was not intended against the Jews, so neither is it probable that it was principally designed against the Pagans: I do not deny, but that

the apostles and first preachers of the gospel did carefully instruct and warn their Heathen converts against Polytheism, or a multiplicity of gods, and directed them to the solitary worship of the true and only God; as St. Paul and Barnabas preached unto the Lycaonians, to turn from the idolatrous services of Jupiter and Mercury, "unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein;" and the more firmly to establish them in the true and necessary notion of the unity of the divine essence, it is very likely, that frequently they might mention this with the other Christian verities, which they demanded at baptism. But that which I say, is this, that the constant repetition of this clause, in the order wherein it now stands in the creed, was chiefly designed against some persons different from the Pagans; for to do the Heathens justice, and not to make them worse than really they were, I do not think that it can be proved, that the generality, or at least the wisest and most thinking part of them, did ever own a plurality of gods; but on the contrary, a large volume of testimonies might be produced both from Heathens, and Christians, to evidence that they believed but only one eternal, supreme, unbegotten, and independent being; from *whom* all their other inferior divinities, vulgarly

also called gods, derived their original and essence.

As for the Heathen writers, an infinity of testimonies might be cited from Plutarch, Seneca, Maximus, of Tyre, Plato, Virgil, Hecataeus, Abderita, Xenophanes, Colophoniensis, Orpheus, Cicero, and a multitude of others who have all asserted, that the Pagans received but *one* supreme, infinite, and self-existent God; unto whom the title of Optimus, Maximus, the Greatest, and the Best, was alone ascribed; and that for those other innumerable divinities, called also gods, they were only so termed in an inferior and secondary sense, as they had some resemblance in their natures and virtues to the supreme God, from whom they were derived and generated, and whose children and off-spring they were, and as they were intercessors and mediators between him and the sons of men.

But there will be no need to cite any particular passages from the Pagan authors to confirm this point, seeing the Christian writers, and even those who have professedly writ and disputed against the idolatry and superstition, of the Heathens, have at the same time acknowledged, that they believed but one supreme and eternal God. St. Austin informs us, that

although the Pagans worshipped several deities, yet their doctors declared these to be but so many different names of their great god Jupiter, who was called in the air Juno, in the sea Neptune, in the earth Pluto, in hell Proserpina, in war Mars, in vineyards Bacchus, in the woods Diana; yea, all these other inferior gods and goddesses, as Opis, Lucina, Cunnina, Fortuna, Rumina, and the rest of that numberless company, were "all of them but one and the same Jupiter," who, according to the diverse and various benefits that he bestowed upon mankind, was worshipped under different names, and appellations suitable thereunto; "which being so," as the said father continues there to write, "what would they lose, if in a more prudent compendium they did worship but one God? For, what part of him would be despised, when he himself is worshipped?" Homer and Hesiod were the first, as Athenagoras relates from Herodotus, "who invented the names, generations, titles, honors, arts, and shapes of the Grecian gods;" and yet Justin Martyr affirms, that not only Pythagoras and Plato, with the rest of the wise philosophers, but that even this blind, superstitious, and idolatrous Homer, in the golden chain of his gods and goddesses, doth at length place all the power and dominion in one supreme

God, declaring the other gods to be so far distant from the deity, that they were to be reckoned amongst men.

Lactantius in the first book of his institutions, both learnedly and largely proves from the Heathen poets and philosophers, that they believed but one supreme and self-existent God; the like he doth again, in his book of the anger of God, where he shews, that although Plato, Pythagoras, Hermes, Antisthenes, and several others, who were too many to be all mentioned, made use of several names, yet they all agreed, that there was but one power which governed the world.

There is a remarkable passage in Arnobius to this purpose, wherein an Heathen is represented, complaining, "that the Christians wrongfully accused those of his religion, to deny a supreme God; whereas," saith he, "he is by us called Jupiter, and is esteemed the greatest being, spacious temples, and august capitols being built and dedicated unto him." Unto which Arnobius amongst other things pertinently replies, "let it be so as you say, that your Jupiter and the omnipotent God are one and the same: But why then do you unjustly persecute us? Why do you dread the very mentioning of our name, as the worst omen, if you worship the

same God with us? Or why, in the same cause should the inferior gods be kind to you, and enemies unto us?" But unto this the Heathen answers, "the gods are not enemies to you because you adore the omnipotent God, but because you deify, and with your daily prayers worship a man that was born, and which is most infamous, one that was put to death with vile persons on a cross." So that from these few quotations it is most evident, that the generality of the Heathens, or at least the wisest and best part of them, believed but one infinite, supreme and eternal God; from whence it follows by a natural consequence, that the unity of the godhead professed in the creed, could not principally be intended against them.

It remains therefore, that we search elsewhere; and that, since the occasion of this clause was chiefly taken neither from Jews nor Gentiles, we fix it on some false and heretical Christians: which we have the greater reason to do, seeing not long after the apostles days, and even in those days themselves, there were several sects and divisions of heretics who embraced tenets contrary hereunto, as also to what immediately follows concerning God, that he is the "father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;" and to several other arti-

cles, which were all inserted in the creed, on purpose to oppose those heresies; from the consideration of the nature and particular points whereof, it necessarily follows, that the designed meaning of those articles is only to be fetched and brought: The books of Irenæus will be of great use to us herein, and afford us the greatest light into those parts of the creed of any book that I know, since therein we have the amplest and clearest relation of the ancient heresies of the Gnostics, Marcionites, and others; against which, a great part of the creed was levelled and intended; and in particular this clause of *one God*, which was inserted to require our belief, that there is but one infinite, supreme, beginningless and eternal God; and that this one God, and none other, was the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all other beings whatsoever, “almighty, maker of heaven and earth:” so that this expression of *one God* is to be understood, either absolutely, without regard to any other article in the creed, and so it denotes our faith, that there is but one eternal, independent, self-existent God; or relatively, as it hath reference to what immediately follows, and so it signifies, that one and the same God, and not a different or diverse being from him, is “the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.”

As for the first of these, that hereby it is

professed, that there is but one infinite, omnipotent, eternal, and self-existent God, the very clause itself, "I believe in God;" but especially, as it is in all the most primitive creeds, whether Greek or Latin, "I believe in one God," puts it beyond doubt or question. That which is farther incumbent on me, is, to shew the heresies that gave occasion for this profession in the creed, and to prove that they were the real causes thereof.

As for the heresies, I suppose them to have been those of the Valentinians, Cerdonians, Marcionites, and others, who, as Irenæus assures us, "were all the disciples and successors of that first grand heretic Simon Magus:" As for the Valentinians, the most considerable branch of the Gnostics, there was an exact agreement betwixt them in the same Principles; but their opinions were various and inconstant, for which they are frequently reflected on by Irenæus. Some of them asserted two coeval and coexistent principles, God and Matter, as Drosierius a disputant for this sect, in the dialogues of Origen, affirmed "matter to be coeternal with God;" and Hermogenes, who was living when Tertullian wrote against him, maintained, "that matter was coeternal with the Lord, that it was neither born nor made, but was without both be-

pinning and end ;" which, as Tertullian there very solidly proves, was really and effectually to make two gods.

The reason which induced him to embrace this opinion, as is easily to be gathered from Tertullian's treatise against him, was that puzzling question so famous in the primitive church, *Pothen to kakon*, or, whence was *evil*? For, not being willing to make God the author of evil, and withal imagining it to be a substantial nature, and to have an original cause suitable thereunto, that he might therefore throw the source and origin of it upon another, he affirmed " matter to be a natural evil principle, coeternal with God, who was contrary thereunto; from whence all other evil had its spring and rise:" and from the same reason also, as Tertullian assures us, Marcion, who saw Polycarp, the disciple of St. John, roundly declared in words at length, that there were two coeternal independent beings, the one a good God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, author of the gospel, and the fountain, source, and origin of all good; the other an evil God, the creator of the world, the giver of the law, and the cause, root, and author of all evil.

It must indeed be owned, that the Marcionites disagreed amongst themselves; for altho' Marcion *himself*, with several of his follow-

ers, introduced but two principles, yet according to the relation of Rhodon, who lived at that time, some of them advanced farther, and asserted three eternal principles; the chief and head of whom, was one called Synerus: of which faction also was Megethius in the dialogues of Origen, who there affirms, that "there were three principles; the first the good God, who was the father of our Lord Jesus Christ: the second, the creator of the world; and the third, the devil."

But the body of the Marcionites, and their master himself, maintained only two gods; the one a good God, father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and God of the Christians; the other an evil God, maker of heaven and earth, and God of the Jews. So, Irenæus, who lived in those days, assures us in several places, that "the followers of Marcion held but two gods, who were naturally so, being distant from one another, the one a good, and the other an evil God:" and Marcus, the champion for this sect of the Marcionites, in the dialogues of Origen, affirms, that for his part, "he believed not three principles, but only two, who were equally self-existent, without beginning, infinite, and in every place."

But though this impious and abominable tenet was in those days generally known under

name of Marcionitism, as it was afterwards under that of Manicheism, yet it was hatched and vented before Marcion, and more before Manes; for, as for Marcion is by none allowed to have been the inventor thereof, but all affirm him to have led it from his master Cerdon, a noted one in the early days of christianity, of whom Tertullian writes, "that he introduced beginnings, that is, two Gods, a good God, a fierce God; the good one being the father god, and the fierce one the creator of the world:" and Theodoret, that "he maintained, that there were two Gods; the good God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ; the other a just God, the creator of all things:" and even before Cerdon, as was before his scholar Marcion, was this heinous heresy broached in the church; Theodoret informs us, that both Cerdon and Marcion took the occasion of their blasphemy from Simon Magus: and Epiphanius expressly assures us, that the author of two evil principles, a good and a bad one, went to Jerusalem about the days of the apostles, there disputed with the elders about the nature of the godhead, and the creation of the world.

This blasphemous heresy then being so easily espoused from the very apostolical age, the belief of one God was inserted in the creed in opposition thereunto, as it may be gathered from Irenæus; who, after he hath recited the heresies of the Valentinians, and others, informs us in contradiction thereunto, that "the church had received from the apostles and their disciples, to believe in one God, the father almighty, &c. And in various places, throughout his whole five books, he confutes the Marcionites dotage of two Gods, shewing it to be not only inconsistent with reason, and opposite unto the scripture, but also contradictory to the faith and belief of the church; whence Epiphanius in his large exposition of the creed, in opposition to the aforesaid heretics, tells us, that by this clause we are obliged to believe, "that there is but one God, who was the God both of the law and the gospel, both of the old and new testament." And Tertullian in his prescriptions against the Valentinians, Marcionites, and other heretics, sends them to the rule of faith, wherein it is professed that there is but one God: And, that I may add yet one instance more, it is very observable in the dialogues of Origen, that when Adamantius, who sustained the part of an orthodox Christian against the Marcionites:

by agreement first of all to recite the Catholic faith, which he would defend in contradiction to the forementioned heretics ; he began his creed with, " I believe there is but God ;" and when one of the Marcionites dared hard to prove his three, and the others two Gods, Adamantius so invincibly evidenced the unity of the godhead, Eutropius, the judge of the disputation, awarded the victory to be on his side ; and in the end of the last dialogue he repeats articles of the true Christian faith, he begins it with the belief of " one and only God ;" it makes it very probable, that this clause in the creed of " one God," was in part designed to contradict the blasphemous and impious conceit of those heretics, who introduced more Gods than one. But, Secondly, this clause may be also considered in relation to that immediately follows in the creed, viz. " the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth ;" in which regard it is a declaration, that we believe this one God, and not a being distinct from him, to be the father and almighty creator of all things ; for though some heretics owned one supreme and original God, yet they denied him the creation of the world, his paternity and almightiness in that Catholic sense, wherein it is to be understood in

the creed ; and those other heretics, who blasphemed the unity of the godhead, contented not themselves with that, but dared to divest our true and only God, whom they called their kind and merciful one, of one of the greatest acts of his power, wisdom and goodness, even the making of heaven and earth ; whereby they totally destroyed one of the most obliging relations we stand in to God, which is that of a creature to his creator.

Who those heretics were, with the particulars of their several heresies, shall be considered under those respective terms predicated concerning God in the creed, as they present themselves to our observation in their several order : there is nothing farther necessary in this place, than to shew, that this was in part the intended sense of this clause of the creed ; for the proof whereof, innumerable passages might be produced from the writings of Irenæus ; as in both his creeds, which he opposes to all these kinds of heretics, he expresses this article, by believing “ in one God, the father almighty maker of heaven and earth ; ” and contrary to the delirious fancies of those atheistical wits, affirms, that the whole church of God throughout the world, received one and the same God the father ; and that “ the universal church received this by tradition from

the apostles, that there was but one God, the maker of heaven and earth."

This clause is likewise so expressed in two of Tertullian's creeds, as that the condemnation of these various heretics appears most evidently to have been designed thereby; in one of them it is said, that "by the rule of faith we must believe, that there is but one only God, and that there is no other besides the creator of the world;" and in the other, that we must thereby believe "in the only God almighty, the framer of the world." The same also may be observed concerning the several creeds of Origen; in one of which, our faith is declared to be in "one God, who created and disposed all things, and made those things that are, out of things that were not;" and in that creed, wherein Adamantius professed the Catholic faith in opposition to the erroneous tenets of the Marcionites, he begins it with "I believe in one God, the very creator and maker of all things:" and so Cyril of Jerusalem explains the unity of the godhead, in contradiction to the heresy of the Simonians, Carpocratians, Marcionites, and others, who made two Gods, one a good God, and the other a just God; and in another place, where he repeats and explains the creed, he thus explains the unity of God, "that he is

both good and just ; so that if we should hear any heretical person say, that the just God is one, and the good God another, we should remember it to be a venomous heresy, daring wickedly to divide the one God.

From all which it is most apparent, that the intended design of this clause of one God was in part to declare, that whatsoever is immediately predicated concerning God, in the subsequent part of the creed, related to one and the same God ; that one and the same divine being, was the father almighty, maker of heaven and earth ; that all things had their spring and original, form and shape, from one and the same divine essence, who was the one and only God, so one as that there is none other besides him, and like unto whose unity there is nothing to be found in the whole world, whereby it may be represented or expressed.

After the existence and unity of God, there follows next in the creed, that relation wherein he stands to us as our father, as he is the author, cause, and origin of all beings. The reason whereof is most probably to be fetched from the Gnosticks, and the other heretics of the first ages, who denied God's paternity in this respect, by disowning him to have been

the creator and producer of the world, and of the various creatures therein; and in an agreeableness thereunto did avowedly refuse to attribute unto God this very title or appellation of father, acting therein far worse than the heathens, who by the glimmering light of nature had conceived of God under this notion, that he was the Pater omnipotens, *Pater andreonte Theonte*, and as such had revered and adored him; for the proof whereof, the single testimony of Lactantius shall suffice, who writes, that "every God in the worship and prayers directed to him, was of necessity called father, not only for honor's sake, but for reason's also, because he is ancients than man, and as a father, gave him his life, health, and food; and that therefore, Jupiter, and Saturn, and Janus, and Bacchus, with the rest of the Gods, were each of them called father."

The notion or signification of a father is so well known, as that it may be needless to say, that in its proper and restrained sense, it denotes such an one as communicates life and being to another generation being the foundation of paternity; and that more largely and comprehensively, it signifies such an one as confers kindnesses, favors, and benefits upon another: every one knows, according to the forementioned citation from Lactantius, that

he is a father who gives life, health and food, to another : but now, such an one the Gnosticks had the wickedness to deny God to be. How in this respect they blasphemed the divine majesty, I shall more particularly relate and prove, when I come to that article of maker of heaven and earth, unto which this word thus considered, hath a nearness and affinity ; In this place it shall be sufficient to remark in general that the Gnosticks and Valentinians imagined the supreme and omnipotent God to live within circumscribed limits, in an unactive, and idle rest and ease, whilst they feigned an inferior deity to be the creator of the world, the author of every being thereof, and of every gift necessary and suitable thereunto, unto whom therefore they gave this title of father ; which in this acceptation, is alone communicable to the supreme and infinite majesty, calling this fancied maker of the world, " father and king of all, father and God, creator of the world and father ;" thereby making themselves guilty of the last and greatest blasphemy. Wherefore, to declare the true Christian's abhorrence of such an odious crime, Irenæus in his opposition thereunto, doth generally understand by God's being the father, his being the fountain, source, producer and creator of all other beings whatsoever ; and therefore, after he hath revealed at large this mystery of iniquity, this

portentous and horrid imagination of the Gnosticks, he immediately repeats as a proper antidote against the infection thereof, the apostles creed, by which we are obliged to believe in God the father; and having in his whole first book, related the extravagant fancies of these wild and distracted brains, and their blasphemous denials of God to have been the author and creator of the world, and of all things therein, he informs us in the beginning of his second book, he intended to prove therein, that the true and supreme God was the "alone creator, and the alone father."

But there may be also another sort of *paternity* included in the creed, viz. the peculiar relation wherein God stands to his son, that he is his father, that he hath begotten him; the manner whereof is peculiar, eminent and *ineffable*, and is not only impossible to be explicated by us, but such an attempt would be both perillous and arrogant: For, who can search out God to perfection? Secret things belong unto God, but revealed things unto us and our children. Wherefore, waving all searches or inquiries into the manner or nature thereof, and reserving what I have farther to say on this point, till I come to the generation of the son, contained in that article, "his only son," I shall only in this place endeavor to

prove, that this article was understood in this sense by the primitive church, and as such hath obtained a place in the creed.

St. Austin thus explains it; "observe," saith he, "that when in the creed the name of God the father is conjoined, it is thereby declared, that he was not first of all a God, and afterwards a father; but without any beginning, he is always both God and father: when thou hearest the word father, acknowledge that he hath a son truly born, as he is called a possessor who possesseth any thing, and a governor who governs any thing: so God the father is a term of a secret mystery, whose true son is the word." To the same effect likewise, Ruffinus thus writes in his explication of this article, "when thou hearest the title father, understand that he hath a son who is the image of his substance; for as no man is called a lord, unless he hath a servant or a possession, whom he lords it over; and no one is called a master, except he hath a scholar; so no one can in any manner be called a father, unless he hath a son: By this name therefore by which God is called a father, the son is also demonstrated to subsist likewise with him." The same exposition is also given by Petrus Chrysologus, Maximus Taurinensis; and in a word, almost by all others, who have had oc-

men to mention this subject; and especially, since the appearance of the Sabellian and Arian heresies, this interpretation hath been more largely insisted upon, and more curiously explained.

The next word to be explained, is, *almighty*. Believe in God the father *almighty*; the Greek word whereof is *Pantokrator*, which properly signifies the universal domination of God over all his creatures; and his providential regency and gubernation of them; in which sense it is only in part to be understood in the creed and together with that to be enlarged to some other significations of the word, which were denied and opposed by some primitive heresiarchs.

In the first place therefore, this term *almighty* may be considered as a declaration of God's infinite power and energy, by which he made the world of nothing, without the assistance of angels, or any other help whatsoever; that his might and force is so great, that he needed not any co-existent matter, whereon to shew the efficacy and operation thereof, but created all things of nothing; so neither did he lack the assistance of angels, or of any other principle whatsoever, to assist him in that which next follows in the creed, viz. "the making of heaven and earth;"

which by the way, shews us a good reason, why the word *almighty* is placed before the creation of the world in our rule of faith ; for if it had only signified God's dominion and providence, its proper order would have been after the making of heaven and earth, the subject about which it is exercised : but, seeing it also signifies the omnipotency and irresistible efficacy of his power, by which he could form and produce all creatures without any previous matter, as also without the help of angels, or any other being, the present order of the creed seems to be most natural and unconstrained, that the profession of God's almightiness should precede the first and great demonstration thereof, viz. the making of heaven and earth.

Now that this was in part the designed sense of this word, I shall evince after I have shewn, who those heretics, and what their heresies were, which gave an occasion hereunto. Concerning the Valentinians, it hath been already proved, that some of them affirmed matter to have been co-eternal with God ; out of which confused heap, he produced the world in the same order and regularity wherein it now is ; and others of them, with several divisions and subdivisions of the Gnosticks, although they allowed not matter to have been coeval with

nt and original God, yet they affirmed
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e must know then, that these monstrous
ics, in imitation of Hesiod's Pagan Theo-
, imagined a copulation of thirty Aions, as
termed them; fifteen of which were male
fifteen female, begotten and generated one
another; twenty-eight whereof, either
ately or immediately, proceeded from
us, or Depth, the origin and first princi-
of all; and his wife Sige, or Charis, that
ence, or Grace. These thirty Aions they
ed to lead an idle and unactive life, with-
imaginary space, Pleroma, or fulness;
that Sophia, the last of the female ones,
g not able to accomplish a passionate and
tionate desire which she had, brought forth

an inform matter, called Achamoth, which was thrown out of the Pleroma, from whose tears, laughter, sorrow and fear, proceeded the substance and foundation of all animal and material beings; under which, they included the creator himself, and the matter by which he effected the work of creation,

Now this ridiculous and monstrous opinion, was an impious reflection on the power of God, as though he had not strength sufficient to prepare matter himself for his works of creation, as well as to create his works out of matter provided to his hands in another way and manner; it is both "impious and foolish," as Irenæus writes, "not to believe that God could by his own will, make those things that are, out of those that were not; and to ascribe the substance of matter to the tears, laughter, sorrow, and fear of an unintelligible and imaginary Achamoth: and being ignorant of the power of a spiritual and divine substance, not to believe that God who is strong and rich in all things, created matter itself."

But, besides these forementioned heretics, there were also others who derogated from the omnipotent power of God, by ascribing the creation of the world unto angels; as did the followers of Simon Magus, the Menandrians,

Saturnilians, Basilidians, Carpocratians, and
 others, who all combined in this degradation
 of the almighty, and the taking from him the
 glory of this first manifestation of his power
 and Godhead, in creating and framing this
 stupendous fabric of the universe.

Now against all these various heretics and
 sundry heresies, to declare our belief of the
 omnipotent power and operation of God, was
 this word *almighty* partly inserted in the creed,
 whereby it is professed, that as there was no
 eternal substance or matter antecedent to the
 creation of the world, from whence it should
 be formed and taken, so God needed it not
 for that end; neither stood he in any want of
 the help and strength of angels, or others, to
 effect so glorious a work; but was infinitely
 able, and sufficient of himself, to produce that
 and ten thousand times more; if it had pleas-
 ed him so to do.

In which sense, it is expounded by the au-
 thor of the second explication of the creed to
 the Catechumens, extant amongst the works
 of St. Austin; "we believe God," saith he,
 "to be almighty, who making all things, is
 not made himself; and therefore he is al-
 mighty, because he made of nothing whatso-
 ever is made; for no matter helped him, or

which he should shew the power of his workmanship, but he created all things of nothing: for this is to be almighty, that not only the fabric itself, but also the matter thereof be found by him, who had no beginning." And when Eutropius, the judge of the disputation in the dialogues of Origen, sums up the Catholic faith, he applies this term *almighty*, not only to God's providential government of the world, but also to his infinite power in the making thereof, without the aids of any matter co-existent with them.

Irenæus bewails, that the Gnostics and Valentinians did by their craft and subtilty draw away those from the truth, who did not keep a firm faith in one God the father almighty: wherefore, as a preservative against their infection, he adviseth his reader firmly to adhere unto the creed, believed by the universal church, and received from the apostles; which creed saith he, obliges us to profess, that "God is almighty, who made all things not by angels, or any other powers; for he needeth none of these things, but by his word and spirit he compleated and perfected them." And in several other places, in opposition to the forementioned heresies, he writes, "that the angels did not make us, nor any power inferior to the father of all: for God

wanted none of these, to effect what he had before determined with himself to do, as if he had no hands of his own ; for the son and spirit were always present with him, by whom and in whom he did all things freely and spontaneously." So that, from all these citations it is most evident, that this word *almighty* in the creed, doth in part denote the infinite power and energy of God, whereby he was able without the assistance of any other, to create the world, and to have done whatsoever else had pleased him.

But, secondly, it also signifies God's universal, absolute, and sovereign dominion over all things and persons, and his providential regency and gubernation of them all, according to counsel of his will, for his own praise and glory. This indeed is the primary notion of the Greek word *Pantocrator*, which hath a respect to governing and ruling, and is thus explained by Ruffinus, who writes, that in the creed God "is called almighty, because he hath dominion over all:" and to the same effect Salvian affirms, that we must believe, "according to the rule of faith, that God rules all things:" and so Cyril of Jerusalem applies this term *almighty* to God's providential power, whereby he governs and rules all persons and

things whatever. Now this assertion of God's providential regency of the world, and of all affairs therein, seems to be levelled and intended against the Gnostics and Marcionites; both of whom refused to own, that God concerned himself with the management and direction of the world; and the former of them at least arrived to that pitch of blasphemy, as to attribute unto another being this very title of *almighty* considered under this notion of rule and authority; for of these Gnostics the venerable Irenæus assures us, "that whilst they confined the supreme and eternal God within a certain and imaginary space, circumscribed by bounds and limits, and placed the maker of the world (whom they supposed a distinct being from the true and only God) in a seventh heaven of their own framing and imagination, they allotted this inferior world, the seat of mankind, to be the habitation of the Devil, wherein he governs and tyrannizes;" for which reason, they called him Cosmocrator, or the governor of the world; and Pantocrator, which is the very word almighty ascribed to God in the creed. Or, if some of them were not arrived to that degree of impiety, as to place the government of the world, in the hands of the Devil, yet the best of them refused to lodge it with the one only independ-

dent, and self-existent God, but appropriated it to that other subordinate deity, whom they fancied to be the creator of the universe ; and unto whom for this reason they attributed the very word "almighty," which is in the creed. As for the true and supreme God, they confined him within their feigned plenitude, imagining him there to live in ease and quiet, in rest and silence ; that as he did not make the world, so neither was he in any manner concerned about the guidance and direction thereof ; therein agreeing, as Irenæus observes, "with the Epicureans ; and being full with the spirit of the Devil, they invented a father, neither taking care, nor providing about those things that relate unto us."

And as for the Marcionites, they did not only, as it hath been already related, introduce two eternal causes, God and the Devil, and ascribe the creation of the world unto the latter ; but they also attributed the rule and government thereof unto him, calling him for that reason, as Irenæus informs us, Cosmocrator, or the ruler of the world : whereas, as the said father excellently well proves in opposition thereunto, the Devil hath no natural and lawful authority over man, the chief inhabitant of this inferior world, and the principle subject of divine providence here below ; that

whatsoever dominion he hath, it is all usurped, obtained through that apostasy and rebellion into which he drew mankind with himself; that the Lord Jesus Christ hath undertaken for the rescue and delivery of human nature, and in that nature he hath in his own person already conquered and subdued the Devil, wresting his unjust power and dominion from him; and that in his own appointed time, he will enable all his members to do the same, to tread down satan under their feet, personally and particularly for themselves.

That which gave occasion to this and other heresies of the like nature, was their setting up an odd and incomprehensible notion of good and evil: for they imagining, bonity and pravity not to be affections or qualities of beings, but beings themselves; that all natures were substantially evil, or substantially good; and consequently apprehending the necessity of an origin or maker suitable to these different essences, they introduced two eternal causes, God and the Devil; the one essentially good, author of all created good, and the governor and ruler thereof; the other essentially evil, author of all created evil, and the governor and ruler thereof: so that not only the creation, but also the providence of God was blasphemed by these Marcionites, in allotting

the Devil the rule and government of this inferior world, at least of the greatest part of it; which latter words I add, because of them who maintained three eternal principles, allowed unto the supreme God the promulgation of the gospel, the con- and gubernation of the Christians: As Megethius, a Marcionite of this sect, affirmed, that "there were three principles;" Irenaeus replied unto him, "that according to his apprehension, the word *Arke*, or principle, came from *dia to arkein tinos*, from a person ruling and governing; and therefore he would willingly know of him, over whom these three principles did preside:" Unto which Megethius answers, that "the good principle rules the Christians, the maker of the world the Jews, and the evil principle, the heathens." So that even this sect of those heretics, who acknowledged some part of God's dominion and providence, did so far oppose it, as that they made the extent thereof very narrow and inconsiderable, much less than what the scripture saith of it; that [1. ciii. 19.] "his kingdom ruleth over all;" not only the [Psal. lxxxix. 11.] "heavens, but the earth also is his, [Psal. xxiv. 1.] with the mass whereof, the world, and they that dwell therein." Wherefore, in the dialogues of O-

igen, after Eutropius had fully heard the disputation between the orthodox Christian, and the two Marcionites, he adjudges the victory to the former, and ratifies his confession of faith, that there was but one God, "who ruleth over all, whom nothing can oppose, and unto whose will nothing can resist;" and where he again repeats the substance of the creed, he explains God's almightiness, by "all things being subject unto him;" which, with what hath been said before, sufficiently proves, that this epithet of *almighty* in the creed includes, in opposition to the Gnostics and Marcionites, the dominion, rule and authority of the one only God, and his providential disposal of all affairs and events in the world.

But, thirdly, there is yet another interpretation of this word *almighty*, which is, that it signifies God's immensity, infiniteness, or omnipresency; that he is every where, and in every place; that he contains all things, and is himself contained of none; that he is immeasurable, incircumscribable, without bounds or limits, which was also designed against the Gnostics; for these monstrous and abominable blasphemers supposed a certain space or plenitude, called in Greek *Pleroma*, far above this inferior world, bounded by a certain being called *Horos*; or that I may speak it in

plain English, terminated and environed by a circle within the sides whereof the supreme and incomprehensible God was contained, and never came out from thence to take notice of the affairs of this lower region, but satisfied himself in rest and silence with the other Aions in those vast and ineffable spaces limited by that circle which did encompass it. Such base and contemptible thoughts did these deluded wretches entertain concerning the divine majesty, whose greatness is incomprehensible, his being infinite, and essence unmeasurable, [Isa. xl. 12.] who "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with his span, and comprehends the dust of the earth in a measure;" who, as Irenæus writes, "fills both heaven and hell, and is with every one of us." Whosoever would see any more of this blasphemous frenzy, with a solid confutation thereof, he may find enough of it in the five books of Irenæus, and particularly in the places quoted in the margin.

But that which is pertinent to the matter in hand, is, that the fathers levelled this clause of God's almightiness in the creed, against this impious heresy; and therefore we find that Adamantius, an orthodox Christian, suspecting probably Marinus a Bardesianist, to incline to these Gnostical dotages, asked him,

“dost thou acknowledge God to be almighty, or no?” Unto which, when Marinus answers, “I say that he is almighty,” Adamantius immediately replies as an explication of the former question, that he might prevent all equivocating evasions; doth he contain all things, or, is he contained himself? Understanding the word *Pantocrator*, used in this part of the creed for almighty, to have reference to the infiniteness and boundlessness of God’s nature, that he comprehends all things, and is not comprehended or limited by any thing himself. And so Cyril of Jerusalem paraphrases this part of the creed, “that God is not circumscribed in any place, neither is he less than the heaven, but the heavens are the works of his fingers, and the whole earth is comprehended in his fist; he is in all, and out of all.” And unto this interpretation of the word, the very derivation thereof, it being from *para to panta kratein*, doth also direct us, as well as unto God’s providential disposal and government; of which I have already spoken; for *krateo* signifies not only to rule and govern, but also to contain and comprehend; and so consequently, *panta kratein* denotes not only a governing, but also a comprehending of all; which was long since observed by Theophilus

bishop of Antioch, who alledges this to be the reason for which God is called "almighty, because he contains and comprehends all things; for the heights of heaven, and the depths of the abyss, and the ends of the world, are in his hand, and there is no place where he rests."

But, to conclude with this subject, it appears from what hath been said, that by assenting to this term almighty in this precedent part of the creed, it is thereby declared, that the power of God is omnipotent, his dominion universal, and his essence infinite.

After the assertion of God's omnipotency, there immediately follows in the creed, the profession of one most glorious and admirable effect thereof, viz. the creation of the world; expressed in these words, "maker of heaven and earth;" where by "making," we shall take it for granted, is meant a creating or producing of what was made out of nothing; and by "heaven and earth," all creatures whatsoever, both visible and invisible, according to the saying of Augustin, that "by the name of heaven and earth, is signified every creature that God made and created."

Now that which gave occasion to the inserting of this act of God's power and might in

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whom existed Ennoea, or his thought, whom they also called Charis and Sige, [Grace and Silence] which couple begat and produced two Æons more, Nus and Alethia, [The Mind and the Truth] the first a male and the second female; Nus they also called Monogenes, [only begotten] who could alone apprehend and contain the greatness of his father Bythus. Nus and Alethia emitted another couple, Logos and Zoe, [the word and life] who set forth two more, Anthropos and Ecclesia, [man and the church] all of which were in number eight, and constituted the first order of the Æons, whom they termed the root and substance of all the rest.

After this, the two last couple, for the glory and praise of their first father, emitted eleven couples more; of which, Logos and Zoe set forth these five, *Bythus and Mixis, Ageratus and Henosis, Autophues and Hedone, Aciritus and Syncrasis, Monogenes and Macarius and from Anthropos and Ecclesia proceed these six; †Paracletus and Pistis, Patricus and

* *Depth, and mixture, never old, and union; born of himself, and pleasure; unmovable and composition; only begotten, and blessed.*

† *Comforter and faith, fatherly and holy motherly and love; perpetual mind, and understanding; preacher and blessedness; willis and wisdom.*

Epis, Metricus and Agape, Aënos and Synesis, Ecclesiasticus and Macariotes, Theletes and Sophia ; which completed the number of thirty æons, or fifteen couples, the one half male, the other female ; who were supposed by these extravagant brains to copulate and beget, in the same manner that men and women do generate and produce their children.

These all lived within a vast and uncontrivable place, far distant from these lower regions, called by them *Pleroma*, or fullness, mutually enjoying and rejoicing each other, till a certain accident, as I may so term it, gave some disturbance to their repose and quiet ; for though, as it was said before, Nus, or Monogenes, was only delighted with the apprehension of the unmeasurable greatness of Bythos, the root and origin of them all ; yet the other Æons also vehemently longed to have the same happiness of seeing their original author and producer ; and especially, the last female Æon, called Sophia, was so unreasonably passionate to obtain her desire of comprehending the greatness of the Propator, or their first father, that being not able to accomplish it, through vexation and grief at the said disappointment, she brought forth an informal matter, or such a monstrous birth, which some-

times happens to women, at which she was so affrighted, confounded and astonished, that she would have been dissolved, or fallen out of the pleroma, if Bythos had not, in compassion to her, emitted a certain power called *Horos*, [limit or circle] who environed the plenitude wherein the *Æons* dwelt, and confirmed her therein, but cast that inform matter therefrom into those infinite vacuities where the world was afterwards created; after which that none of the *Æons* should be any more affected as Sophia had been, Monogenes emitted another couple, unto whom they gave the names of Christ and the Holy Ghost, by whom means the *Æons* being established, they celebrated, with great joy, their propator or bythos; and to his honor, every one of them brought together the best they had, and set forth Jesus, whom they also called the Saviour, and *Logos* [the word] and patronymically Christ, with whom also they emitted the angels to be his attendants.

All these precedent affairs were transacted within the plenitude, or that vast space bounded by *Horos*; from whence the *Æons* never stirred, being always limited thereby, and confined therein: but as for that inform matter produced by Sophia, and thrown by *Horos* out of the Pleroma into their truly imaginary

spaces, they fancied it to have been so far pitched and assisted first by Christ, and afterwards by the Saviour, that a spiritual form, or a form *kata ten gnosin*, was given unto her ; which being thus shaped, they called Achamoth,* whom they most ridiculously imagined, by her tears, laughter, sorrow, and such like things, to have emitted from herself the matter and foundation of all these animal and material beings which were afterwards created ; and that first of all, from her animal substance she formed the great father and maker of all inferior things, or of all without the Pleroma, except that eighth heaven which she herself framed for her own habitation, and is between the Pleroma and the dwelling-place of this her son, called by them Demiurgus, or maker of the world ; who being moved and excited by her, ignorantly and unknowingly created the whole universe, with every being therein ; framed seven heavens, in the supremest whereof he dwells in a supine, stupid, and careless manner, neither knowing any thing of, nor concerning himself about the affairs of mankind ; but leaving them altogether unto the Devil, who was without his knowledge made

* It comes from an Hebrew word which signifies wisdom, as her mother Sophia's name doth in Greek.

by him, lives in this world, and rules and governs all the events and transactions thereof.

Thus have I, as succinctly as possible, in the most intelligible manner that I could, explicated the Valentinian system relating to the first cause of all things, and the creation of the world ; wherein not only the villany and impiety, but also the delusion and folly of those heretics is to be admired and wondered at which is so gross and notorious, that it would have seemed incredible and past belief that ever such a senseless number of people should have appeared in the world, if the uncontrollable records of the most primitive times had not made it most evident, that many embraced this pernicious way ; and that whilst others blasphemed the creator of the universe by ascribing the framing thereof to angels these dishonored him, by attributing it to an ignorant, doltish and inferior divinity.

But besides these heretics, there were yet others, who in another way and manner denied the heaven and the earth to be made by the one only supreme and eternal God ; and these were the Cerdonians and Marcionites the introducers of two eternal principles ; the inferior whereof, according to their notions, was the father and creator of the universe.

As for Cerdon, Tertullian writes, "That he invented two principles or two Gods ; the one a good God, who is the superior ; and the other a fierce God, who was the creator of the world." And as for Marcion, he was Cerdon's scholar, and with him maintained two eternal causes, a good and a bad one, God and the Devil ; the latter of whom, as Irenæus frequently assures us, he asserted to be the "framer of the world ;" by which means he made the creator to be an inferior God, as Justin Martyr, who lived in his days, writes, "That Marcion, of Pontus, imagined, that there was a greater God than the maker of the world."

With two great reason now may we reflect with horror and amazement on these monstrous and unaccountable heresies ! Who could possibly imagine, that the fancies of men should ever have been so miserably deluded ? But, the matter of fact is too certain to be called in doubt ; these heresies were so spreading and contagious, that as an antidote against the venomous infection thereof, the governors of the primitive church found themselves necessitated in contradiction thereunto, to insert in the creed, that the one God, the father almighty, is "the maker of heaven and earth," as we find in Irenæus ; who after he

hath related several of the precedent blasphemies against God as creator, the first argument that he useth for their confutation, is the creed received in the church, wherein we profess our faith in one God, the father almighty, "maker of heaven and earth and of every thing therein;" and in another place he saith, "that the universal church throughout the whole world had received this tradition from the apostles, that there was but one God, "the maker of heaven and earth:" and again, disputing against the Gnostics and Valentinians, he cites for their confutation, the rule of faith received from the apostles in all churches, which saith he, teaches us, "that there is but one almighty God, who made all things by his word, whether visible or invisible, sensible or intelligible, temporal or eternal; which rule if we observe, although they affirm many and various things, yet we shall easily convince them to swerve from the truth." But should I produce whatsoever is to be found in the books of Irenæus pertinent to my present purpose I should swell this chapter into a volume.

In the dialogues of Origen, when Adaman-
tius the orthodox Christian repeated the Ca-
tholic faith, which he would defend in oppo-
sition to the Marcionites; as he confessed
therein, that there was but one God, so he

omitted not to add, "that this one God was the creator and maker of all things;" which he so well proved and confirmed, that Eutropius the Judge of the disputation, condemned the Marcionites for fools; and together with Adamantius, in contradiction to their heresy, not only inserted in his creed the unity of God, but also that he was "the creator and framer of all things;" so that when we recite this clause in the creed, of "maker of heaven and earth," we thereby profess our belief, that the one eternal and supreme God, is the alone creator and former of all things whatsoever, both visible and invisible,

C A A P. III.

The Nicene and more ancient Greek creeds, read in one Jesus Christ; which was a designed opposition to the blasphemous division of Jesus from Christ, by the Gnostics and others, whose several heresies are related. By believing in Jesus Christ, we profess that there was such a man as was known by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, which word Jesus was an usual name amongst the Jews; and that this Jesus was the Christ, or the Messiah, which was constantly a part of the creed from the very beginning of the gospel; it being

the foundation of all christianity, and the which was most violently assaulted by the Jews: the word Christ signifies anointed unction used amongst the Jews on several occasions; in allusion whereunto Jesus is called Christ, from his consecration to his triple office of prophet, priest and king: his unction is to be understood in a spiritual sense; God the father was the anointer, and the holy ghost the oil, which was poured upon his human nature at his conception and baptism. His only son, wherein are two things contained; First, that he is the son of the father; his son which was foretold by the prophets, whence Messiah and the son of God were convertible terms amongst the Jews at the time of our saviour's appearance. Christ was the son of God in several respects; but in one way peculiarly so, which is the second thing in this clause, that he is his only son. The scriptures affirm, that God had one son in a peculiar manner, which is expressed in the Greek creeds, to be by generation; which was perhaps opposed to the Valentinian emission or division from the father; caution to be used in the searching into this mystery: Christ said in the Greek creeds to be the Monogenes, or the only begotten, in contradiction to the Gnostics, and others. This article was coeval with Christianity, and denotes Christ's divine nature: the title Lord, denotes the dominion of Christ, who is Lord by way of eminency, being supreme Lord over all; and particularly, the Christian's Lord, our Lord: two opposite

parties in the universe ; the one under Christ, the other under the Devil, who have each their separate kingdoms ; the Devil's interest among spirits, is unknown to us, but amongst mankind he very much prevailed, inasmuch that in several places he was worshipped as God ; but when Christ came, he destroyed the Devil's kingdom, which was but an usurped one, and erected his own kingdom ; the admission whereinto was at baptism, when the baptized person not only acknowledged Christ's Lordship, but also expressly renounced the Devil's power. This article coeval with Christianity, and denotes a submission to Christ as our Lord, in opposition to the Devil. In the next place, the creed declares Christ's humanity, the necessity of his being man : his incarnation blasphemed and denied in sundry ways and manners, by various heretics ; against whom was levelled, whatsoever is mentioned in the creed from our Saviour's conception to his resurrection. The conception and nativity are in most creeds joined together in one sentence. Ebion, Cerinthus and others, affirmed Christ to have been a man, conceived and born in the ordinary way of generation ; against whom it is declared, that he was conceived by the holy ghost, and born of such a woman as was a virgin. Several heretics whose names are mentioned, denied that Christ assumed a material body from the substance of his mother, but held that his body was framed in heaven and passed through the Virgin Mary as water through a pipe ; their rea-

son for this heresy, which is emphatically condemned by this expression, *ek Marias, or, of Mary*: the strange notion of the *Apellezians* concerning the making of our Saviour's body, against whom, with the precedent heretics, the creed directs us to believe, by his being born of the Virgin Mary, that he took from her flesh the real substance of his body: the birth of Christ employed also in conjunction with his passion, crucifixion, death and burial, to denote the reality of his body: These last four not all found in one and the same creed, till *St. Augustin's* days: the monstrous consequences of an imaginary and fantastical incarnation, which was maintained by a prodigious variety of heretics from the day's of *St. John*, as by the *Simonians*, *Menandrians*, &c. Against whom was inserted in the creed, the birth of Christ and his sufferings; which latter point was so convincing a proof, that to prevent any cavils, as if it were a doubtful and uncertain thing. The time thereof is declared to have been under *Pontius Pilate*, who was *Procurator* of *Judæa* in the reign of the emperor *Tiberius*; To condemn also the forementioned heresies, the crucifixion of our Saviour follows, that it was not *Simon of Cyrene*, as the *Basilidians* affirmed, but he himself who was crucified; and likewise his death which is mentioned because the certainty thereof is the foundation of the gospel: by death is meant the separation of soul and body; after which, for the same intent, follows the disposal of his dead body, viz. that it was buried, or laid in the grave.

HAVING in the former chapter spoken concerning our faith in God the father ; in this I come to consider in part, of that which relates unto the son : the beginning wherof is, "and in Jesus Christ;" wherein the first thing observable is, that the Nicene and more ancient Greek creeds read, "and in one Jesus Christ;" putting an emphatical force and energy upon the term One ; as in one of the creeds of Irenæus, the Christian faith is not only terminated upon one God the father, but also upon one Jesus Christ ; and where the said father exhorts his readers to a firm adherence under the faith, which the church received from the apostles, and distributes to her children, this is one article thereof, that there "is but one Christ the son of God:" which particular emphasis in the oriental creeds, was long ago remarked by Ruffinus, who assures us, "that as they did all read in one God the father almighty, so also in one Lord Jesus Christ, in conformity, as he thinks, to the authority of St. Paul, that there is but one Lord and one God."

But, as I conceive a more probable account of this emphatical expression may be fetched from the blasphemous and horrid imaginations of the Gnostics, Cerinthians, and others, who by dividing Christ from Jesus, denied the uni-

ty of our Saviour's person ; concerning the former of which heretics, Irenæus writes, "that they did not only endeavor to withdraw persons from their faith in one God the father almighty, but also from their faith in one Lord Jesus Christ," by separating Jesus from Christ, affirming them to be two distinct and different persons, and not one Christ Jesus, as the creed declares.

The general opinion of the Gnostics relating to this matter, seems to have been this, "that Christ was the son of their creator, whom they termed Demiurgus ;" from whom he derived an animal life, as from his Grandmother Achamoth he received a spiritual one ; that he passed through the Virgin Mary as water through a pipe ; and that at his baptism, Jesus who lived with the thirty Æons within the Pleroma, descended into him in the form of a dove, and continued with him till his passion, when the said Jesus left Christ, and returned back to the Pleroma in an invisible and incomprehensible manner.

The blasphemies of Valentinus, a principal leader amongst the Gnostics, respecting this particular, are thus briefly expressed by Theodoret, that he asserted, "that the only begotten was one, and the word another ; that

there was one Christ within the plenitude, and another Jesus; and again one Christ without the plenitude; affirming moreover, that Jesus was incarnated, but putting on the Christ that was without, and assuming unto himself a body of an animal substance: thus making Jesus and Christ to be two different persons. Which heresy was hatched before his time, in as much as we find it ascribed to Cerinthus, who affirmed Jesus to be a mere man, "the son of Joseph and Mary, into whom Christ descended after baptism, in the shape of a dove, from that principality which is above all, and then revealed the unknown father, and wrought miracles; but in the end, Christ fled from Jesus, and Jesus suffered and rose again, whilst Christ remained impassible, being spiritual." Against which error of Cerinthus, Irenæus assures us, "St. John levelled his gospel persuading them, that it was not as they said, that there was one Jesus the son of the creator, and another Christ, who came from the Pleroma, who remaining impassible, descended into the foresaid Jesus, the son of the creator, and afterwards returned back to the Pleroma again."

Now if St. John designed his gospel for the confutation of this heresy, it is no wonder that the church in her most early days inserted in the rule of faith a proper antidote there-

against, requiring all her sons to believe in one Jesus Christ, which was a direct contradiction to all the forementioned heresies; for as Irenæus well reasons, "if these figmen should be admitted, it would necessarily follow, that there are two Christs; for, if one suffers, whilst the other is incapable thereof and one is born, whilst the other descends into him so born, and afterwards leaves him, it is most certain that they are not one, but two which division and separation of our Saviour person is such an intolerable blasphemy, that as the said father writes, "Christ Jesus shall judge the Valentinians for it, when he shall come to judge the world."

But, though the Eastern creeds did read in "one Jesus Christ," yet in the West, when the churches were not so much infested and ravaged by the Gnostics, the creed, as our present one doth, expressed this article without the addition of the term "one," saying, "as it is in Jesus Christ, his only son our Lord, &c." In which words, our faith is declared in the son of God; wherein we have him first described by his name Jesus; and then by his office, that he is Christ; and afterwards by his natures both divine and human, with several acts belonging thereunto: unto each of which I shall speak in their respective order.

And first of all, by the word Jesus, I suppose the designed sense thereof to have been no other than this, that hereby we must profess our belief, that without question or dispute there really was such a man living in the world as was called Jesus, or Jesus of Nazareth, to distinguish him from others of the same name; for it must be observed, that Jesus was a proper name, attributed and given unto others besides our Saviour: [Heb. iv. 8.] "as Joshua the son of Nun was called Jesus;" and besides him, we read [Colloss. iv. 11:] "of Jesus who was called Justus," and [Acts xiii. 6.] "of Barjesus, or the son of Jesus;" it being an usual name amongst the Jews, and like unto other names, imposed upon children at their circumcision: according to which St. Jerom tells us concerning our Saviour, "that as Christ was his common name denoting dignity, so Jesus was his proper name; by the which," as Lactantius writes "he was called amongst men."

As for the exact time when this Jesus lived here on earth, it is not mentioned in this part of the creed, seeing in another part it is declared to have been in the days of Pontius Pilate; neither indeed was it necessary to be here expressed, since this article being co-eval with Christianity, it was a thing then universal-

ly known and owned by all, as might easily be proved both from Pagan and Jewish writers there was such a man as Jesus of Nazareth, who preached an heavenly and divine doctrine, and confirmed it both by an exemplary life and undeniable miracles; wherefore the bare existence of such a man was sufficient to be expressed, whose name Jesus was principally inserted in the creed, and by consequence, chiefly to be considered, for no other reason than as it related, to the following word Christ, and in Jesus Christ; the intended meaning whereof was this, that the man called Jesus, who lived at Nazareth, is Christ; that is, is the Messias, or the anointed of God; that very person, who was designed and appointed by him to be the instructor, king and saviour of mankind: the declaration whereof at baptism, was required from the very foundation of Christianity, seeing it is that on which our whole religion depends, and what was most violently assaulted by the Jews, out of whom the first converts were made.

St. John relates concerning the fury and malice of the Jews, that they had agreed, that if any man did confess that this Jesus was the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue, that is, be excommunicated; in which hatred against the person and name of Jesus, the

successors of those blind and enraged zealots
 have obstinately continued to this very day :
 They universally expected indeed about that
 time the coming of the Messias ; but they im-
 agined, that it should be in worldly pomp and
 splendor, that his salvation should be tempo-
 ral and earthly, that he should appear in a
 state of grandeur and majesty, and advance
 them to a suitable condition of magnificence
 and terrestrial greatness : wherefore, when
 quite contrary to all their imaginations, they be-
 held our Jesus to be in mean and despised cir-
 cumstance, an inhabitant, and as they believ-
 ed, born in the contemptible town of Naza-
 eth, from whence no good could come, at-
 tended only by a few despicable and unlearn-
 ed fishermen, labouring under penury and
 want and living in an universal contempt ; they
 were scandalized hereat, and could not brook
 this Jesus for their Christ, or Messias, who
 was so directly contrary to the gaudy conceits
 they had entertained of him, which is an open
 denial and total subversion of the whole gos-
 pel ; for if this Jesus be not Christ, our reli-
 gion, as was hinted before, is vain and false :
 the very basis and foundation of the whole
 body of Christianinty is, that Jesus of Naza-
 eth is the Christ, or the Messias ; wherefore
 from the first preaching of the gospel, the be-
 lief of his being *the* Messias or Christ, was

always required at baptism; as is farther evident from the exhortation of St. Peter to the convinced Jews, [Acts ii. 38.] "to be baptized every one of them in the name of Jesus Christ," for the remission of sins: and from his [Acts x. 48.] "baptizing Cornelius, and his friends, for the same intent, in the name of the Lord;" where, seeing they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, it is most apparent that they must necessarily yield their assent to this proposition, that Jesus was the Christ, who had procured pardon and forgiveness for them.

In the confession also of the [Acts viii. 37.] Eunuch, which he made antecedent to his baptism there is included an acknowledgment of this necessary truth, that Jesus is the saviour of the world; as Irenæus writes concerning him, "that he had been forehanded catechized by the prophets, concerning God the father; and that he only lacked to be instructed in the coming of the son of God, which was now done by Philip, who easily persuaded him, that he was Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; which method was also observed by the apostles, who in their sermons to the Jews did principally shew them, that that Jesus who was crucified, was the Christ the son of the living God." Wherefore, when

peat these words in the creed, "in Je-
rist," we thereby declare our sincere and
ned belief, that that man who was call-
us of Nazareth is the Christ: which
signifies in Greek *Anointed*, as *Messias*
in Hebrew also. I might hence take an
on to enlarge on the use and end of
n amongst the Jews, and on the analogy
between it and that of our Saviour; but
ing not so pertinent to my present design,
having been already largely handled by
I shall only briefly mention so much
f, as will be necessary to render this
e complete and entire,

ne kingdom of Israel therefore, this cer-
/ of unction was used to design the con-
ion, dedication or appointment of any
r or thing to any particular act or office;
pecially, it was employed in the voca-
consecration, and inauguration of their
ets, priests and kings; as [1. Kings xix.
Elisha was anointed to be a prophet by
;" and [Lev. iv. 3.] "the Levitical
rescribes unction to every high priest,
investiture in his office;" and [1. Kings
"Zadok the priest inaugurated Solomon
kingdom, by anointing him with oil."
in allusion hereunto, our Saviour is said

to be anointed by a spiritual unction, being set apart, consecrated, and dedicated thereby to be a great prophet, an high priest, and an universal king; in a most eminent manner uniting in himself the three offices, viz. prophetic, sacerdotal and regal, which were divided in the Jewish administration, as Petrus Chrysologus remarks in his exposition thereof, "that Jesus was called Christ from anointing; because, that unction which formerly by a figure ran upon kings, prophets and priests, the divine spirit poured with a perfect plenitude on this king of kings, priest of priests and prophet of prophets,

As for the manner of our Lord and Saviour's unction, it cannot be supposed to have been by real and material oil, but it must be understood of a spiritual and divine operation. Athanasius observing the several resemblances and parallels that are betwixt David and Christ, in every one whereof the latter hath the pre-eminency, mentions this for one: "David," saith he, "was anointed with material oil; but the manner of our Saviour's anointing is thus described in the 45th Psalm, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a right scepter is the sceptre of thy kingdom: thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee

With the oil of gladness above thy fellows: where it is said, with the oil of gladness, lest by the word anointing we should apprehend equality between them: David and Christ were both anointed, but the one was anointed by man, and the other by the father; which action is ineffable, and the manner thereof incomprehensible: wherefore the psalmist saith, the oil of gladness above thy fellows; and although both are alike anointed, yet their unction is not of equal worth and dignity; as, as Christ retains the parallel, so also he preserves the pre-eminency."

He who anointed our Saviour was God the father; and the oil with which he performed it, was the Holy Ghost: "In the word Christ," saith Irenæus, "there is understood the anointer, the anointed, and the unction; the anointer is the father, the anointed is the son, and the unction is in the spirit;" as he saith by the prophet Isaiah, "the spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me; signifying the father who anointeth, the son who was anointed, and the spirit who is the oil:" which oil was chiefly poured upon him at his conception and baptism; and, as Origen observes, "is to be referred to his human nature," in which he was anointed by the God who is both Lord and Saviour.

After our Saviour's human name, and the declaration of his function and office, there follows in the creed his filiation, or sonship, expressed in the word son, which is his divine name; whereby we are not to understand any thing that is human and common, but such a filiation as is divine, proper and peculiar unto him, and is not communicable and attributable unto any other, being his father's only son; wherein are two things observable: first, that he is the son of the father, his son: secondly, that he is his only son, i. e. such a son, or a son in such a manner as never any other is or was.

The oracles of the old testament did foretel that Christ should be the son of God; [Psal. li. 7.] "I will declare the decree; the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. [Psal. lxxxix. 26, 27.] He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation; also, I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. [Isa. ix. 6.] Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. [Hosea xi. 1.]

When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." Whence amongst the Jews, at the time of our Saviour's appearance, Messias and the son of God were convertible terms, designing the same person, as is evident from several passages in the new testament; as, [John i. 49.] Rabbi, thou art the son of God, thou art the king of Israel. [John xi. 27.] I believe that thou art the Christ, the son of God, which should come into the world. [Matth. viii. 29.] What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou son of God?"

Now Christ is on several respects called the son of God in scripture, as he is so called on the account of his temporal generation, being conceived in an extraordinary manner in the Virgin's womb; by the power of the Holy Ghost, whence the Angels told the Virgin Mary, [Luke i. 35.] "He should be called the son of God." And, he is also so called by reason of his resurrection from the dead, whereby he was, as it were, begotten to another life by God his father, who raised him, as in Acts xiii. 32, 33. "And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again;" as it is also written in the second psalm, "Thou art my

son, this day have I begotten thee." And he is likewise called the son of God, by reason of that high office whereunto he was called by the special designation and immediate will of God: [John x. 36.] "Say ye of him, whom the father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the son of God?" As also, by reason of his great dignity and authority, being next in order to the father, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, whereby he hath the actual possession as heir of all. [Heb. i. 2, 3, 4, 5.] "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they; for unto which of the Angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son."

Now in all these forementioned respects, our Saviour was the son of God by way of em-

igency and excellency beyond and above all others ; but he doth not seem to have been so solely and solitarily, and exclusive of all others, which is the filiation and sonship intended in the creed : It being said therein, that he is “ his only son,” which is the second thing observable in this clause ; and intimates the peculiarity of his sonship, that he is the son of God in such a way or manner, as never any other was, is, or can be.

The holy scriptures do abundantly assure us, that God had one particular son in such a peculiar way and manner as he had never any other ; as, [John iii. 16, 17, 18.] “ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life ; for God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God. [Rom. viii. 3.] God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. [Gal. iv. 4.] When the fullness of the time was come—God sent forth his son made of a woman, made under the law. [1 John iii. 8.] For this

purpose the son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. [1 John iv. 9.] In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him." And several other passages there are in holy writ, which shew, that God had one son in a proper and peculiar way, so and in such manner as he had never any other son ; which way and manner is expressly declared in the Greek creeds, to be by generation : All the Greek creeds reading, and in Jesus Christ " his only begotten son, *son huion autou te monogene* ; and supposed in the Latin creeds, under the term *only*, and in Jesus Christ his *only* son. For, as Athanasius says, " Christ is the only begotton, and therefore the only."

" When thou hearest," saith St. Cyril, of Jerusalem, " Christ called a son, do not think him to be an adopted son, but a natural son, an only begotten son, not having any brother ; for he is therefore called the only begotten, because there is none other like him, either as to the dignity of his deity, or his birth from his father." And again, " When thou hearest him called a son, do not understand him so only abusively or improperly, but understand him to be a true son, a natural son." So

that Christ was the true and natural son of God, begotten of him before all worlds ; that as by generation, one of the same kind and nature is produced with a likeness and similitude to the producer, so in a more perfect and eminent manner, the father before all worlds, begot a son like unto himself ; which manner of his production by generation, was perhaps placed in the creed, in opposition to the blasphemies of the Valentinians and Gnostics, who imagined it to be by emission, and consequently by division and section from that nature or being, from whom he was emitted : Wherefore, Athanasius in his creed, not in that which commonly passeth under his name, but in another, expressly opposeth the generation of the son, to this emission of the Gnostics ;—“ We believe,” saith he, “ in one only begotten word, born of the father, without beginning of time, from all eternity, being not a division from the impassable nature, or an emission, but a perfect son.”

As for the manner of the father's eternal begetting of the son, there are various similitudes used by the ancients to help our conceptions therein ; as that the father begat the son, as a fountain doth its streams, and the sun light, and a root the branches, and several other such like : But whether all of them will

abide a strict scrutiny, I shall not here enquire ; only this I shall venture to affirm, that none of them do yield us any adequate or satisfactory apprehension of this sublime and incomprehensible mystery. For which reason, great caution is to be used in our searches therein- to, and expressions thereof, that we do not with too great nicety and curiousness dive into his profound and incomprehensible secret, lest whilst we endeavor to shew our learning and knowledge, we betray our ignorance, and, what is worse, conceive and utter things unbecoming the divine and infinite majesty.

This was the wise and pious advice of the famous Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, who was the first discoverer and condemner of Arius : “ It is true,” writes that bishop, “ that the son was begotten ; but he that enquires farther into the manner thereof, is not to be reckoned amongst the pious, seeing he hears not to that which is written, Seek not after things which are too difficult for thee, and search not into those things which are too high for thee ; for if the knowledge of many other things, far inferior to this, exceed the reach of an human understanding ; how then shall any without madness pretend curiously to search into the essence of the divine

word? Of whom the Holy Ghost, by the prophet, saith, Who shall declare his generation?" Wherefore, according to this prudent counsel, I shall forbear to say any thing concerning the manner of the divine generation of the son, and pass on to another observation, which may be made on this clause, as it is in the Greek creeds, viz. That Christ, and not any other, is the *Monogenes*, or the only begotten; which seems to be a designed contradiction to the blasphemous Gnostics, who denied Christ to be the only begotten, affirming their second male *Æon* to be the only begotten; whilst disowning Christ so to be, they made him to be a being formed within the Pleroma, after the number of the thirty *Æons* was completed. According to which Irenæus saith, "That they imagined the only begotten to be one, and Jesus to be another." And Athanasius writes concerning Ptolemæus the flower of Valentinian's school, that he "affirmed, that the unebotten, or God had two yokes," as he termed them, "his mind and his will;" and that first he imagined, and then willed; and that he could not effect what he had imagined, till the power of his will was superadded thereto; and that from his mind and will proceeded the only begotten, and after him all others: from which heresy, as A-

thanasius continues there to write, the Arians afterwards learned that God's counsel and will preceded the generation of the word ; whereas the orthodox maintained, that the word was the very mind of God, and so was the very first-begotten, and generated by him in such a manner, as never any one else was ; as Maximus Taurinensis writes on this article, that Christ "is called the only, or the only begotten, because he is the only one so born, and hath no companion in his nativity."

This article of the creed hath been co-eval with Christianity, and as wont to be demanded at baptism of the persons who came to be baptized, as appears from the form of the celebration of baptism, which is in the name of the son, as well as of the father and the Holy Ghost ; wherein is necessarily supposed a belief of Jesus Christ to be the son of God ; it being in itself impossible to be baptized in the name of the son, without acknowledging the person in whose name he is baptized, to be that son : which appellation of the son of God denotes his divine nature, as that of the son of man implies his human ; as was long ago observed by Novatianus in his exposition of this part of the creed, viz. " that as our Saviour's being the son of man declares his humanity, so his being the son of God is an un-

deniable proof of his divinity :” And, “ Christ is not only a man, because the son of man, but is also God because the son of God.”

After the filiation and divine nature of our Saviour, there follows in the creed his dominion, expressed by the title Lord ; for that the dominion of Christ is thereby asserted, appears from the derivation of the Greek word *kurios*, used for Lord : *kurios*, saith Origen, *legetai dia to kurieuein tmon*, Lord comes from a word that signifies ruling, lording or governing ; under which notion, it is frequently used by the Septuagint to express the Hebrew word *adon*, which properly implies government and authority.

Now Christ is not only a lord, but he is so *kata exoren*, eminently and singularly so ; whence he is frequently in the new testament only called the Lord, without any farther or other addition ; as, [Mat. xxviii. 6.] “ come, see the place where the Lord lay,” [Luke xxiv. 34.] The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.” [John xx. 2.] “ They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.” [I. Cor. xi. 23.] “ For I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you.” And innumerable other places there

are in the new testament, where the Lord alone absolutely taken, is used determinately for Christ.

The scripture is very copious in declaring the dominion of Christ, that his empire is universal, and his kingdom everlasting. [Mat. xxviii. 18.] "All power," saith our Saviour, "is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And, [Mat. xi. 27.] "all things are delivered unto me of my father." [John iii. 35.] "The father loveth the son, and hath given all things into his hands;" whence he is particularly called, [Acts x. 36.] "the Lord of all," and [I. Cor. xi. 3.] "the head of every man." [Acts ii. 36.] "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly," saith St. Peter, "that God hath made him Lord and Christ, even this Jesus whom ye did crucify:" [Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11.] "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, or things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the father." [Luke i. 31, 32, 33.] "He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob

forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. [Heb. i. 8.] Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever ; a sceptre of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. [Dan. vii. 14.] And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and kingdoms, should serve him ; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." And several other such like passages there are in the holy scripture, which shew the extensiveness and duration of our Saviour's kingdom, that he is king and lord of all.

But, though Christ be thus the universal Lord, and hath a supreme dominion over all, yet the creed particularly terms him *our Lord*, which intimates some propriety of dominion that he hath over us Christians, as we are immediate subjects of his particular kingdom.

There are some hints and imperfect discoveries in the scripture of two great powers in the universe, contending against each other under their respective heads and leaders ; the head of one party being Jesus Christ, and the head of the other the Devil, who is also called in scripture Satan, Apollyon, the Dragon, and the Old Serpent ; there being, as it seems

very probable, one particular spirit by way of eminency called the Devil, who is at the head of that party, which opposeth itself to the son of God and his followers ; as appears from the sentence on the wicked at the last day, which is, that they depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for [Matth. xxv. 41.] "the Devil and his angels ;" and from other places of scripture which might be enumerated. These two chiefs, Christ and the Devil, have two separate kingdoms ; between whom there is a perpetual and unwearied opposition : [Rev. xii. 7, 8, 9.] "And there was war in heaven ; Michael and his angels fought against the Dragon, and the Dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven ; and the great Dragon was cast out, that Old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." The kingdom of Christ is represented to us under the notion of a kingdom of light, as that of the Devil is under the notion of a kingdom of darkness, as in Col. i. 12, 13. "Giving thanks unto the father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son.

(1 Thes. ii. 12.) "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." And St. Paul was sent to preach the gospel unto the Gentiles, (Acts xvi. 16.) "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." And St. Barnabas, towards the conclusion of his epistle, gives an elegant description "of the two ways; the one of light, over which preside the angels of God, who is the eternal Lord; and the other of darkness, which is subject to the angels of Satan, who is the ruler of wickedness." What number of spirits the Devil drew into his party and interest is unknown to us, for that the scripture hath not revealed it; but our own observation will give us too sad a view of the extent of his kingdom amongst mankind, where he gradually enlarged his empire, till at length the whole earth was covered with ignorance and darkness; and especially at the time of our Saviour's coming into the world, the generality of mankind were so gained and blinded by him, that they had almost lost all right and true notions of God, and were so far sunk into idolatry, that in several places the Devil himself was actually worshipped and adored as God; for proof whereof, I need not cite the oracles at Delphos and other places, who were so ma-

ny Devils and impure spirits; seeing the scripture is plain in several places, that several of the Gods whom the Gentiles worshiped, were Devils ; as (Deut. xxxii. 17.) “ they sacrificed unto Devils, not to God, (Psalm. cvi. 37.) yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto Devils ; and (1 Cor. x. 20.) the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils, and not to God.”

St. John saith, (1 John v. 19.) “ That the whole world lieth in wickedness,” *hō kosmos holos en to ponero keitai*, which may be rendered, “ the whole world is subject to the wicked one, or to the Devil ;” as it was most remarkably at the time of our Saviour’s coming in the flesh, when the generality of mankind were the Devil’s vassals and subjects ; and (Eph. ii. 2.) “ being dead in trespasses and sins, walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, and the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience ;” whence the Devil is called the God of this world. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) “ In whom the God of this world hath blinded the eyes of them who believe not ;” and the prince of this world : (John xiv. 30.) “ The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me ;” and (John xvi. 11.) “ the

prince of this world is judged :” And the Devil and his angels are called (Ephes. vi. 12.) “Principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world.”

But now when our Saviour came into the world, he erected his kingdom amongst mankind, and broke the Devil’s kingdom and power, and wherever the gospel came, put a period to the worship and adoration of the Devil, and destroyed his empire and dominion ; whence the author of the epistle to the Hebrews saith, (Heb. ii. 14.) “that Christ destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil ;” that is, he abolished him as to any farther pretence of empire or power over us ; and St. John saith, (1 John iii. 8) that “the son of God was for this purpose manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil :” Satan (Luke x. 18.) “fell from heaven like lightning” at the coming of our Lord, who ejected and cast out the Devil. (John xii. 31.) “Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out.— (John xvi. 11.) The prince of this world is judged :” We are now redeemed by the power of Christ, from the slavery and bondage of the Devil.

The possession which the Devil got of the

human nature, was, as Irenæus writes, “a forced and usurped one, acquired through our sin and apostacy, by which we became the house and vessels of that strong man ; but the Lord Jesus hath bound this strong man, and delivered us from his usurpation and tyranny.” He came into this world, and erected an adverse and opposite kingdom to the Devil’s kingdom, and invited all men to come into his kingdom, and be subjects thereof; the entrance or formal admission into which, was at baptism, when the party baptized made a visible and open renunciation of the Devil’s kingdom and interest, and publicly submitted himself to Jesus Christ as his Lord and governor.

This was one of the principal subjects of the apostle’s sermons, that Jesus Christ was Lord ; and this was the principal engagement made by new converts at their baptism, to submit to him as such. Thus St. Peter concluded his sermon, which he made on the descent of the Holy Ghost, (Acts ii. 36.) “Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” And so St. Peter and the other apostles, in their defence before the Sanhedrim, told them, that (Acts v. 31.) “God had exalted Jesus

with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And so St. Paul saith, (1 Cor. viii. 5, 6.) "that though there be (*id est*, according to popular estimation) Gods many, and Lords many; yet to us there is but one God the father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him: (Ephes. iv. 5, 6.) One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all." So that the very formality of a Christian, and the intention of a person's being such, was to submit to Christ as Lord, which every one professed to be at baptism; that being a visible admission into his kingdom, and an open profession of subjection to him; whence Cornelius, and his company were said to be (Acts x. 48.) "baptized in the name of the Lord," *id est*, they were by baptism initiated into the service of Christ as Lord.

And it is farther observable, that the baptized person did not only own the dominion and Lordship of Christ at baptism, but he did then likewise in express terms, renounce and abjure the vassalage and service of the Devil; it being the ancient course, to demand of every person at his baptism, just before he received the baptismal laver, whether he re-

and our salvation, became the son of man, not disdaining to take on him the seed of Abraham, and to become in every thing like unto us, sin only excepted, that he might redeem and save us, and in our nature vanquish and overcome the Devil, who had captivated and enslaved us : for, as Irenæus observes, “ the Lord being most kind and merciful, and loving mankind, he united man to God ; for if man had not conquered the enemy of man, that enemy would not have been justly overcome : even as if God had not given us salvation, we could not have securely enjoyed it ; so if man had not been conjoined with God, he could not have been a partaker of incorruption ; it behoved therefore the mediator between God and man, by his relation unto both, to reduce them both to amity and concord, and to cause that God should assume man, and that man should give himself to God ;” so that there was a necessity of the mediator’s being really and truly man. “ It was through a conquered man, that death descended on the human nature ; wherefore it was necessary, as Irenæus remarks, that through a conquering man, that nature should ascend into life :” and as Lactantius observes, “ the mediator was to be an example of virtue and holiness to his redeemed ones, which he

could not be as God ; wherefore he incarnated himself, to shew by his own conquering of the desires of the flesh, that the commission of sin was not necessary, but voluntary, and by his own pattern to encourage and enable us to overcome the lusts thereof,"

For these and several other reasons therefore, the son of God, out of his amazing and infinite pity to us, became the son of man, not abhorring the Virgin's womb, that he might accomplish his gracious design of redeeming miserable and lost mankind: this is that divine philanthropy, that astonishing effect of his goodness and mercy, which ravishes the holy angels, and caused those harmonious choristers of heaven to sing at his coming into the world that triumphant song, [Luke ii. 14.] "glory be to God in the highest, on the earth peace, and good will towards men." But yet, such is the degenerate and corrupted nature of mankind, that several of them have disbelieved his incarnation, and accounted it a mere fancy and conceit.

I need not here mention any of these in our days, if there be any such, since my design leads me to the consideration of the former times of Christianity, where there are too numerous spectacles of those who stumbled at

this rock of offence, and from the very age of the apostles rejected this truth of the incarnation; or, if they did not in words disown it, yet by denying the true way and manner thereof, they did in effect disown it: wherefore, against such a number and variety of heretics, and their diverse methods of assaulting this doctrine, the governors of the church inserted in the creed whatsoever follows from our Saviour's conception to his resurrection; the first clause whereof is, "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary,"

Where the conception and nativity are clearly distinguished, the former being ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and the latter to the Virgin Mary; whereas in the generality of creeds, as in those of Ruffinus, Petrus Chrysologus, Maximus Taurinensis, and others, they are thus coupled together, "who was born by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." Tertullian indeed in one of his creeds, distinctly mentions the "conception of the Holy Ghost, and his birth of the Virgin Mary;" but after him, I do not find that any observed this distinction till St. Austin, who writes, "that in the symbol after our belief in God the father almighty, follows our faith in Jesus Christ his son, who was conceived by the Ho-

ly Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary ;" but whether they expressed the conception and nativity distinctly or conjunctly, the same thing was intended by all.

Now the conception of our Saviour by the Holy Ghost, and his being born of such a woman as was a Virgin, was probably designed against the Ebionites, Cerinthians, and such like heretics, who allowed him indeed to be a man, but denied his incarnation in this manner ; affirming, that he was conceived and born in the same way and manner as all other men are, in the ordinary way of generation, by the conjunction of Joseph and Mary.

Thus Ebion taught, as Epiphanius informs us, " that Christ was born of the seed of man," viz. of Joseph ; as did also Carpocrates, who affirmed, " that Christ was not begotten in an extraordinary way by the almighty operation of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of a Virgin, but in the ordinary and common manner, by the two sexes, in Joseph and Mary : " and before either of these, Cerinthus, whose heresy was the occasion of St. John's writing his gospel, vented the same blasphemy, that Jesus Christ being but a mere man, and only excelling in justice, righteousness, and virtue, was not born of a Virgin, but by the seed of Joseph.

Wherefore against these numerous blasphemers, this peculiar and extraordinary way of our Saviour's conception and nativity, was inserted in the creed, as is apparent from sundry places in Irenæus; and amongst them more especially, from his opposing the creed, wherein our Saviour is said "to be born of a virgin," unto these and such like heresies; which is likewise done by Tertullian, who repeats a creed, wherein "both our Saviour's conception by the Holy Ghost, and his being born of the Virgin Mary, are distinctly mentioned in contradiction to the Cerinthians and Carpocratians: Unto which may be added, that Gennadius Massiliensis in his declaration of the Catholic faith, expounds this article in opposition to the Ebionites, after this manner, "that although the son of God was born of a woman, yet it was not by the conjunction of a man as Ebion affirms;" but as the creed directs us to believe, by the almighty operation of the Holy Ghost, who in an invisible and unknown way supplied the place of a father, and begat the holy child Jesus, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of whom he was really born, and from whom he received the true and real substance of his body.

Which latter clause directs us to another end, for which our Saviour's being "born of

the Virgin Mary," was inserted in the creed, viz. to declare the place from whence he fetched the flesh and matter of his body, even from the substance of the Virgin Mary; for, from the most early days of Christianity, the Devil excited a great number to blaspheme the manner of Christ's incarnation in this respect.

Several of them were constrained to acknowledge, that our Saviour had a body, but they would not grant it to be a material fleshly body, formed of the substance of his mother, but they imagined it to be a kind of celestial, supernatural, or heavenly body, as the Valentinians, who held, "that his body was framed in heaven, and passed through the Virgin Mary, as water through a pipe:" which notion was also espoused both by Basilides and Marcion, as Athanasius assures us; concerning the latter of which the said father writes, "that he believed, that God came down from heaven, and dwelled or sojourned in the Virgin, without participating of her substance, being incapable to receive any thing from the nature of man, that was fallen under sin, and subjected to the ruler of wickedness:" which words afford us some light into the cause and reason of this blasphemy of the Marcionites, which seems to be this; these heretics imagining in

the first place all beings to be originally & substantially good or evil, could not in consequence, thence, as the said Father goes on to write, "conceive how a good and Christ should partake of our nature, & be substantially evil, and yet preserve him free from sin and evil." Wherefore, to, or rather cut this knot, they fancied, "Christ brought with him a body from heaven, which returned to heaven again, from which it came, whilst his divinity remained whole and entire." And from the same occasion so, it is more than probable, that the Erianists fell into the same heresy, as Martin of this sect, endeavors to demonstrate "from the absurdity," as he terms it, "of joining our flesh to his pure essence; that Christ received none of his material substance from the flesh of the Virgin, but that he assumed unto himself an heavenly body, which passed through the Virgin Mary, as water through a pipe, without receiving any thing from her; wherefore saith he we confess that he is of the blood of Mary, but not of Mary." From which words, it doth not only appear, that the birth of Christ of the Virgin Mary was intended against the forementioned heretics, that also there was a peculiar emphasis added by this expression, *ex Marias*, or, of Mary to shew and exclude their heretical

who would own that Christ was born *dia Marias*, or by Mary, that is, that she was the organ or instrument that he made use of for the exhibition of his heavenly body to this inferior world, causing it to pass through her, as through a channel or pipe, without receiving any thing from her whilst they disowned that he was born *ek Marias*, or of Mary; that is, that he received his body from her flesh and substance, deriving the matter thereof from her, in the same way and manner, as all other children do.

But, besides the forenamed heretics, there was another strange kind of sect called Apelleians, so styled from their master Apelles, a scholar of Marcion's who owned, that Christ had a real and material body, but denied it to have been formed in the Virgin's womb, or to have participated of any part of her substance, inventing this new and unheard-of way for its composition: "that when our Saviour came down from heaven unto earth," as Epiphanius relates it, "he framed unto himself a body of the four elements," in the which he truly suffered and died; although Tertullian reports it somewhat otherwise of these Apelleians, "that they asserted the body of Christ to be made of the stars, and of the substance of the superior world." But, whether the first

of the last was the real opinion, I shall here enquire, seeing by either of them, denied, that our Saviour assumed his from the nature and flesh of his Virgin mother.

Now against all these heretics, was our Saviour's being born of the Virgin Mary, decidedly mentioned in the creed, as is apparent from that Tertullian opposes his native the forementioned heresy of the Apellians and the same is to be observed throughout whole five books of Irenæus, that hammer scourge of all those primitive heresiarchs, particularly throughout several chapters of third book, where he excellently well proves the verity and necessity of Christ's assuming his bodily substance from the flesh of the Virgin; and then in the fortieth chapter of said book, he concludes with an elegant *apophonema*, "that all the various blasphemies of those diverse heretics were rejected and condemned by the church, and declared against by her, and the contrary truth preserved by all her children, as a precious deposit and most sacred treasury. Unto which may be added the exposition of this article by Gratianus Massiliensis, who applies it not only against the Ebionites, but that also "contra

to the opinion of Marcion, he derived his body from the flesh of the Virgin, and did not bring it from heaven with him."

But the birth of Christ of the Virgin Mary, but not only employed by the composers of the creed to express the subject from whence he derived the matter and substance of his body, but also to assert the reality and certainty of his body; that it was not fantastical and imaginary, but substantial and real; under which notion, it may be considered in conjunction with our Saviour's passion, Crucifixion, death and burial, which were all introduced to exclude those heresies, and the abettors of them, who maintained, That the incarnation of Christ was not true and real, but only in appearance and shew, a mere delusion and cheating impression on our senses; which will not only appear from what shall be hereafter said under each of those particulars, but also from the various manner of expressing these acts of humiliation in the ancient creeds: In both of the creeds of Irenæus, the passion is alone put to signify his sufferings, crucifixion, death and burial: in two of Tertullian's, the crucifixion by itself, doth the same; and generally our Lord's crucifixion comprehended his passion, and his burial included *his death*; as it is in the creeds of Leo


Magnus, Ruffinus, Petrus Chrysologus, Maximus Taurinensis, and others : and sometimes on the contrary, his passion contained his crucifixion, as in a creed of Origen's ; and his death comprehended his burial, as in the creed of Ignatius : which variety of expression naturally leads us to this conclusion, that seeing these terms did mutually include or infer each other, and either of them were indifferently mentioned, that therefore they were primarily intended for one and the same thing ; which, as it will be proved, was to declare, that the body of Christ was real, true and material.

The first creed, wherein they are expressed all four together, is a creed of St. Austin's, who mentions them according to our present form, " suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified dead and buried ;" from whom, as it is probable the compilers of our creed received it, who judged not one of these particulars to be a superfluous opposition to this heresy, but all of them necessary, since they were each of them particularly impugned and denied, and were most fit and proper to confute and gainsay these sottish and blasphemous heretics.

That this abominable tenet was subversive

of the whole gospel, the primitive writers against those false doctors have abundantly shewn; sufficient whereof may be seen in the remaining works of Irenæus, Tertullian and Epiphanius, wherein it is clearly demonstrated, that if Christ had been incarnated and suffered only in shew and appearance, he had been the greatest deceiver and liar that ever was in the world; his murderers would have been excused, and freed from that most horrid and enormous crime; he could not possibly have been the Saviour of mankind, neither should we have been at all obliged to him, but should have been miserably cheated and deluded by him; and it would be our greatest folly to suffer for his sake, who only pretended to have so done for ours.

These being then the natural and tremendous consequences of this horrid and portentous opinion, it seems almost incredible that any should ever have entertained or believed it: but the primitive records contain too numerous spectacles of such unhappy and misguided souls, who even at the dawning and first appearance of the gospel-sun, endeavored to obscure it by these black and sulphurous vapours; the incarnation of our Saviour was no sooner preached, but it was almost as quickly denied, and that not only by Heathens




and foreigners, but even by those who pretended to be his disciples and followers to whom it is probable, St. John refers in his general epistle, where he writes, "that there were then in the world certain antichrist spirits, who would not confess that Christ was come in the flesh:" which spirits were without doubt the Gnostics, who, though crumbled amongst themselves into innumerable sects and divisions, universally agreed in denying the truth and reality of our Saviour's body, affirming it to have been fantastical and imaginary, only in appearance; from whence they were called *Docete*, and *Phantasiastæ*, the false teachers, all of whom Simon Magus, who taught that he was Christ; and that in the time of his incarnation he appeared in shew, in the person of the son:" now that which Simon Magus said of himself, when he imagined himself to be the son, other succeeding heretics affirmed of the son himself; as Menander, his immediate follower and disciple, Cerdon, Marcion, with Saturninus, Basilides, and others, all affirmed, "that Christ had no substance, but that his body was a mere phantasmal apparition, which was neither really born nor truly suffered." I might add the names of several other heretics, who embraced the same unhappy opinion; but to endeavor

enumeration of them all, would be too tedious and burdensome, seeing from the very first promulgation of the gospel, throughout an uninterrupted series of several generations, there ceased not to be some or others under the names of Simonians, Valentinians, Manichees, and the like, who did blasphemously deny and ridicule this necessary and fundamental point, that Jesus Christ is manifested in real and substantial flesh.

The unconstrained consequences therefore of this heresy being so hideous, and the abettors thereof so numerous, and appearing under such various shapes and divers forms, it is no wonder that the compilers of the creed introduced so many terms in opposition thereunto.

Now that the birth of our Saviour was intended for this end, is evident from the creed of Ignatius, wherein, in contradiction to these fantastical heretics, he expressed this article, not simply by Christ's being born, but by his being "truly born of the Virgin Mary; and in the beginning of his epistle to the Smyrnæans, he "glorifies God for their firmness in the immovable faith, that Christ was truly of the seed of David according to the flesh, and truly born of a Virgin;" unto which may be sub-



joined, that in a creed of Origen's this article is expressed, by our Lord's being "born in truth and not in appearance."

That our Saviour's passion was likewise introduced for the same design, as having been particularly attacked by the forementioned heretics, is also evident from the forecited creeds of Ignatius and Origen, in both of which this clause runs, "that he truly and not imaginarily suffered under Pontius Pilate;" and from that other fore-quoted place of Ignatius, wherein he blessed God for the Smyrnæans, that they firmly adhered to the immovable faith, "that Christ truly suffered, and not as some unbelievers affirm, that he only suffered reputatively and according to outward appearance; and from the comment of St. Cyril of Jerusalem on this article, which is, "that Jesus suffered truly for all men; for his cross was not in opinion, nor his redemption in opinion, nor his death in opinion." And indeed, the passion of Christ is so convincing an argument of the reality of his incarnation, that it is surprising how any could possibly withstand the force thereof; for to affirm with the Saturnilians, Basilidians, and others, "that Christ suffered only in fancy and shew, was a poor and most ridiculous evasion;" at which rate, a man may argue a-

gainst those things that can be proved by the most sensible and visible demonstrations.

When Marinus the Bardesianist, affirmed in the dialogues of Origen, that our Saviour thus suffered; his antagonist Adamantius thus closely replies upon him: "if Christ suffered only in the opinion of men, and not in reality, then Herod judged him in opinion, and Pilate washed his hands in opinion, and Judas betrayed him in opinion, and Caiphas adjured him in opinion, and the Jews seized him in opinion, and the apostles were only in opinion, and his blood was shed in opinion, and the evangelists preached the gospel in opinion, and he came down from heaven in opinion, and in opinion returned thither again; and in a word, the salvation of men is only in opinion, and not in truth and certainty." Now as no man would be so absurd and unreasonable, as to ascribe all this to opinion and fancy, so it shews a most wilful perverseness and obstinacy for any man to ascribe only one particular act thereto, when he esteems others in the same circumstances to be undoubted and real; if the actions of Caiphas, Herod and Pilate, relating to our Saviour's passion, were true and substantial, it was very unfair to deny the passion itself so to be, seeing it was equally attended with the same ocular and visible de-

their folly and mistake ; from whence farther affirmed, that we must not believe him who was really crucified, but on him seemed so to be." Which horrid opinion, being an evident subversion of the gospel, a total destruction of the very foundation of Christianity, it is no wonder, that to destroy our faith that Jesus Christ was crucified, well as that a true and real man so suffered. The compilers of the creed inserted this therein, that every true believer might at length yield his assent hereunto, that it was a man, and that it was really Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified by the Jews at Jerusalem in a conformity to which interpretation, Arius thus expresses this article in his creed, that he "was truly crucified ;" and where Eusebius largely explains the creed, he in this sense of the present article, "that he suffered in truth upon the cross."

But lest it might be by any one supposed, that the eyes of the beholders were cheated by a delusion and pretended crucifixion, or that by witchcraft, or ceremony, the distance of the object, disturbed the air by wrong mediums, or any such way, their sight might be so far deceived and imposed upon, as to apprehend him who was nailed unto the cross, to be a true and

stantial man, whilst he was no other than an imaginary appearance, and a mere chimæra : it is farther inserted in the creed, that our Lord was not only crucified, but that he was also dead ; when on the one hand, being deprived of all vital operation, he could not by magic or any other tricks deceive them ; and on the other hand, they themselves without any impediment or hindrance, might freely employ all their senses to search into the certainty and reality of his bodily substance, and easily discover his delusion and cheat, if any such there were : wherefore Ignatius doth in his creed thus mention this clause, “ that he truly died ; the heavenly, earthly, and infernal inhabitants beholding it : ” and Origen in his creed thus expresseth it, “ that he truly died our common death.”

Now there may be several reasons alledged, for which the death of Christ is placed in the creed, and there employed to prove his incarnation ; of which I shall mention but one, that is urged to very good purpose by Tertullian against the Marcionites, and other asserters of a fantastical and imaginary incarnation ; the sum whereof is this, that the whole gospel is subverted, or is an unprofitable fable and whimsy, if Christ did not die ; and Christ could not die, if he had not had real and sub-

stantial flesh: For, as the said father writes, by the blasphemous imaginations that our Saviour's body was only in shew and appearance, "the whole work of God is overturned, the entire weight and fruit of Christianity, even the death of Christ, is denied, which the apostle so expressly asserts to be true, constituting it the chief foundation of the gospel, of our salvation and his preaching; for, saith he, I delivered unto you first of all, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: Now if his flesh be denied, how can his death be asserted? which relates to flesh returning into the ground, from whence it was taken, according to the law of its author."

By the death of Christ, is signified the separation of his soul and body, by which the vital union being dissolved, he was in a perfect incapacity to perform any living actions: "death," saith Ambrose, "is the secession or division of soul and body;" and so Athanasius makes the formality of death to consist "in the disjunction or separation of the soul and body:" after which, each of those two essential parts of man goes to its proper and appointed place, the one to the grave, and the other to the invisible receptacle of departed

souls; according to which universal law of nature our Saviour died, that is, there was a separation of his soul and body; and then, according to the manner and custom of all mankind, his body was committed to the grave, and his soul went unto the dwelling and habitation of separated spirits; both of which immediately follow in the creed, the former in the term "buried," and the latter in this clause, "he descended into hell."

Now, as for the burial of our Saviour's body, that as well as the precedent clauses, was also introduced against those heretics, who impugned the reality thereof; this being a most sensible and undeniable demonstration, that he had a material and substantial body, seeing any one might then have both felt and seen, that what was buried, was real and certain, and that it could be no other than a true body of flesh, which was committed to the grave; for, as Theodoret well observes against these heretics, "the burial of our Saviour was a sufficient confutation of them: for it was neither his soul nor his godhead which the grave received; but his body; for graves are prepared for bodies:" in which sense, this article is generally applied by the primitive commentators on the creed, as by Epiphanius, who writes, "that hereby we are obliged to believe,

that his body was buried in truth, remaining without a soul three days, void of breath and motion, wrapped in a linen cloth, laid in a tomb, and secured by a stone, and the seals of those who rolled it on ;” and by Maximus Taurinensis to the same purpose ; “ that our Saviour’s burial declared him to be truly dead ;” not much unlike to which Petrus Chrysologus saith hereon, “ that the confession of the burial of our Saviour, proves that he assumed true flesh, and that he really died.”

So that after our Saviour’s expiration on the cross, and the dissolution of the vital union between body and soul, that he might in every thing become like unto us, (sin only excepted) and by his personal endurance sanctify every state and condition to all his members, he permitted his body, like unto ours, to be buried in a grave, and committed to the earth, whilst his soul fled to the invisible receptacle of disunited spirits and separated souls, which is contained under the following article, “ he descended into hell,” and will be the subject of the ensuing chapter.

C H A P. IV.

The descent of our Saviour into hell, was never questioned by any : differences in the explanation thereof : the moderation of the church of England herein. This article relates, first, something done by Christ's soul, which excludes the burial of his body, from being designed thereby ; and, secondly, something done by his soul in its separate state, exclusive of the sufferings thereof, whilst he was alive : no exact agreement in the notions of the primitive writers hereabouts : the explanation of the word hell or hades, as it is in the Greek : no one word in the modern English, French or Dutch, comprehensive of the full signification thereof : hell in old English, exactly answers to the Greek hades, which properly signifies the habitation or receptacle of all separated human souls, whether good or bad : the Pagans, from whom the propriety of any Greek or Latin word is to be fetched, understood it in this sense : the modern, or at least the ancient Jews, placed all separated souls in hell : the primitive Christians affirmed, That all good souls immediately after their separation from the body, passed into a place of joy and happiness, which they termed hell, as is at large proved. In the declension of the Greek, and chiefly of the Latin tongue, the word hell began to be solitarily applied to the mansion of departed wicked souls : Origen, amongst the Greeks, doubted of the passage

of faithful souls into hell, since the resurrection of Christ & after him, the doctrine, that all souls go to hell, and re-
 there till the resurrection-day, generally
 vailed in the East; home to this very
 Ambrose, and after him Jerome, and
 entertained the same notion in the West.
 Origen had in the East: Austin was
 certain and unwavering in his apprehension
 thereof: the recession from the
 opinion, occasioned by the mutation of
 images and words: the word hell in
 apostolic sense, could not according to the
 variety of speech, signify any other,
 than the state or place of separated
 souls, whether good or bad. The
 of the word descended; it sometimes
 signifies a simple removal from one
 another: used in the creed, because of
 popular kind of speech arising from the
 notion opinion, that hell was in the bowels
 of the earth; from whence it was called
 Latin *infernum*, and by the Greeks
 and the like: some of the fathers intended
 hell to be in the heart of the earth,
 or under the earth: and some were
 of the situation thereof, but all
 denied it to be the common lodge of
 souls; and in a conformity to the
 dialect, usually termed the passage
 descent into hell, as in this article
 used, by which they meant no other,
 that our Saviour's soul being separated
 his body, went by a local motion to the
 habitation of departed souls, where it

ed till his resurrection-day : which is farther proved from the ends of his going thither : which were chiefly these four : first, to sanctify unto his followers the state and place of their souls, during their separation from their bodies ; secondly, that he might undergo a necessary and principal part of his humiliation : thirdly, that he might personally, and as the head of his church, conquer death and hell, which he did by returning therefrom, and bringing the souls of several of the faithful with him : and, fourthly, that he might subject himself unto the laws of death, and be in every thing like unto us : from whence it more evidently appears, that the descent of Christ into hell signifies no other, than the passage of his spirit unto the receptacle of separated souls. The occasion of inserting this clause in the creed, taken from the Arians, Eunomians and Apollinarians, who in a more cunning way than the former heretics, assaulted the humanity of our Saviour, by denying that he had a reasonable soul : the difference between the error of the Arians and Apollinarians herein, proved, that the Arians, or at least some of them, with the Eunomians, held, That Christ's body was void of a rational soul : but that which rendered this heresy the more considerable and dangerous, was the espousing of it by Apollinarius the younger, the most noted person of his age for ability and piety ; on which account, his fall was a very tender and sensible loss to the church : the time when he vented his heresy, which

was, that Christ had no human soul, but that his divinity supplied the place thereof : the consequences of which opinion are instanced in several particulars. In opposition whereunto, this clause was inserted in the creed, he descended into hell : which point was pitched upon by the governors of the church, because of all the arguments used against the Apollinarists, it was the most unanswerable : on which account, it is frequently urged by the fathers against them, and its falls in most naturally with the frame of the creed, without disturbing the order thereof : the time of the introduction of this article ; the first public Catholic creed, wherein it is found, is that of Aquileia, recorded by Rufinus, though before that in a private creed of Epiphanius, and even before him in a creed framed by a party of Arians at the council of Ariminum, held Anno 359. Several probable designs of those Arians herein, as to clear themselves from the suspicion of the forementioned heresy, to disgrace their great antagonist Apollinarius, and by that means to create feuds and quarrels amongst the orthodox ; who, finding Apollinarius openly to declare for his heresy, entirely abandoned him, condemned him in several synods ; and at length, according to the example of the Arians, inserted in the creed this antidote against his heresy, That Christ descended into hell : which in the Aquileian creed is expressed in a greater latitude, by descending into the lower parts, wherein the burial might be comprehended and de-

signed : but as it is expressed in the Roman, or our present creed, it can have no other than the forementioned signification ; which, to prevent mistakes, is again repeated.

WE are at length arrived to that famous article of our Saviour's "descent into hell:" the truth whereof was never denied or questioned by any ; for the holy scriptures do so expressly assert it, especially that text of St. Peter, cited from the psalmist, [Acts ii. 24.] "Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption ;" that as St. Austin affirms "none but an Infidel will deny it." But, that which hath rendered this article so noted and observable, are the various senses and different significations that have been given of it : the particulars whereof are so multiplied, that I shall not here go about to enumerate them.

In the articles of religion, set forth in the days of king Edward the sixth, this *descent* of our Saviour *into hell*, was expounded by the going of his soul unto the spirits who were in prison, or, in hell, where he preached to them. But in a synod ten years after, in the time of queen Elizabeth, when the articles of the church were framed, which are now subscribed, as Dr. Fuller informs us in

the ninth book of his Ecclesiastical History, the *descent into hell* was barely mentioned, without any explication of the manner thereof ; the compilers of those articles judging it imprudent and unreasonable, to impose upon others any explanation whatsoever of a point so intricate and obscure, leaving every man in love and charity to embrace that sense thereof which seemed to him most genuine and proper ; wherein the moderation of the church of England cannot be sufficiently praised, and is a most worthy pattern unto all others in the like cases, that they impose not their particular and private expositions of a perplexed and obscure doctrine as articles of faith, and terms of communion. Seeing therefore, that such worthy persons as the composers of the fore-mentioned articles, have left every one to his liberty, to pitch upon that interpretation of this article which he esteems to be most natural and easy ; it cannot be any way culpable in me, to make an essay towards the explication thereof ; which, that I may the more effectually do, I shall proceed by degrees ; and first observe, that what is spoken herein concerning our Lord's *descent into hell*, relates to his soul alone,

As the disposal of his dead body had been before declared in the term *buried*, so now

there follows something in the creed respecting solitarily and peculiarly his soul or spirit ; for the proof whereof, I need not say much in this place, seeing it will be fully confirmed by the whole ensuing part of this chapter.— But yet, that I may not affirm any thing without a direct and immediate proof, this will be most evident from the consideration of the use that the orthodox made of this point against that heresy of the Gnostics, by which they “ denied the salvation of the body, and that at death their souls ascended above the heaven unto their determinated place, from whence they shall no more return unto their bodies ;” for against this notion and opinion they strongly argued, “ that it was an overturning the order of the resurrection, a denial of our Lord’s descent into hell, and by consequence of all his followers ; who, according to the scriptures of truth, must first go thither before they can be admitted to the perfect fruition of the ever blessed God ;” unto which convincing argument, these heretics could frame no other reply, than “ that the body was the hell of soul, and that Christ’s being in his body here on earth, was his descent into hell ; from the pains whereof he was set free, when by death he was delivered from his body :” From whence it is most apparent, that the *descent*

into hell is to be understood alone of our Saviour's soul.

For the farther proof whereof, I might cite St. Jerome, who writes, "That it was the soul of Christ which went into hell;" as also Epiphanius, Ambrose, Origen, Athanasius, with many others, who all apply this action of our Saviour's to his soul alone; employing for this end that text of the apostle, cited by him from the psalmist, on which this article is principally founded, [Acts ii. 27.] "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption," whereby the soul of Christ, which God would not leave in hell, they understood the rational part of man, that spirit which distinguishes him from a brute, and subsists after its disunion and departure from the body; wherein it is most probable, they were in the right; for although the word *soul* may by a metonymy be sometimes taken in scripture for the *body*, yet it cannot be so understood, where it is placed in opposition to, and contradistinction from it, as in this text it is. And, as for the creed itself, the burial of our Lord's body having been already asserted, the bare repetition of the same in other terms, would be an unaccountable tautology, and contrary to that bre-

ty which this short summary of faith intends.
 at then :

Secondly, the *descent into hell* respects not only our Saviour's soul, but relates to something done by it in its separate state, after it as disunited from its body by death ; which includes its having any reference to the miseries and agonies that he suffered in his soul whilst alive. Now this will most evidently appear from the sermon of St. Peter, recorded in the second of the Acts, wherein he applies that text of the psalmist, That God would not leave his soul in hell, unto our Saviour, after that the Jews had by wicked hands crucified and slain him ; assuring his auditors therefrom, that although they had crucified and put to death the Lord of life, by means whereof his body was buried in the earth, and his soul gone to hell, yet those two essential parts should return from their respective separated mansions, and be conjoined in the same perfect living man again, according to the prophecy of David, who seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption ; where it is manifest, that the being, or *descending into hell*, related unto the soul of Christ during the interval betwixt his death and resurrection ; that, as during that time,

his body was laid in the grave, so his soul went into hell, where each of them remained in their particular habitations, till the re-union of them again by his glorious resurrection, which was the third day after his death and passion.

Now, suitable to this explication of the fore-mentioned texts, were the notions of the primitive fathers; Athanasius, in his third tract against Apollinarius, concerning the incarnation of our Lord, shews in sundry places, "That whilst his body lay buried in the grave, his soul went into hell, to perform in that place those several actions and operations which were necessary for the complete redemption and salvation of mankind; that he performed after his death, different actions by his two essential parts; by his body he lay in the grave and conquered corruption; by his soul he went into hell, and vanquished death."—Wherefore he writes in another tract against the said heretic, "That after the death of Christ, his body lay in the grave, and his soul went to hell; neither of which were deserted by his divinity, according to that saying of the psalmist, Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." And the author of the dialogues concerning the holy trinity, extant amongst the works of the said father, writes, "That.

Christ, for our sakes, went down by his soul into hell, whilst his body was laid in the grave." But, what need I multiply quotations to prove a point so universally attested by the ancients in innumerable places of their writings? Let therefore the superaddition of the single testimony of Fulgentius suffice, "That after the death of the son of God, his whole humanity was neither in the grave, nor in hell, but that he lay dead in the grave with his body, whilst he went into hell with his soul." From all which it is most evident, that the *descent into hell* relates only to the soul of Christ during its separation from the body, or the time that intervened between his death and resurrection; which being premised, I come now to consider the article itself, or what is predicated therein concerning our Lord's separated soul, which is, that he *descended into hell*; wherein these two things shall be examined: first, the place whither he went, which was hell: secondly, the manner of his going thither, viz., by descending, he descended into hell.

Only before I speak to either of these, I must be forced to premise one thing more, which is, that I do not pretend to affirm, that all the fathers and primitive writers had the same exact notions and conceptions of this ar-

ticle of the creed, since without any reflection it is too manifest, that several of them had no distinct and clear apprehensions thereof, but were uncertain and confused in their notions thereabouts: Wherefore, it will be sufficient for my purpose, to prove what follows to have been the generally received opinion, and that it is the most natural, easy, and unconstrained interpretation of this perplexed and obscure article, " he descended into hell."

Now, as for the first thing, the place whither Christ descended, which is said to be hell; it is most certain that we have not any one word in our modern English dialect, nor by what I could ever understand, in any other of the present European tongues, to express the Greek word by: the word in Greek, which is *hades*, signifies an invisible place, wherein all separated souls, whether good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, are received and contained, as shall be hereafter proved; the half of which signification, is only expressed in the French word L'Enfer, and in the English and Dutch words hell and helle, seeing they are always taken in an evil sense, and do solitarily denote the mansion and habitation of wicked and ungodly souls.

It is true indeed, that in the ancient English

dialect, the word hell was taken in a larger sense, for the general receptacle of all souls whatsoever; and even no longer ago than the old translation of the Psalms, which is still retained in the Common Prayer Book, it was used in this general acceptation, as in Psalm lxxix. 47. "what man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of hell?" Where hell must be understood of the general receptacle of all souls, or otherwise the words of the Psalmist would not be true, for, all souls do go to that hell which is the place of the damned: and even long before that, as Dr. Towerson informs us, in a Saxon discourse written above seven hundred years ago, it is said of Adam, "that after he had lived nine hundred years, he went with sorrow into hell;" where, since none but reputed heretics ever denied the salvation of Adam, it is most reasonable to conclude, that by the hell to which he went, nothing else is to be understood than the common receptacle of all departed souls, whether good or bad. Which ancient sense of the word hell, may be farther confirmed from the primary and original signification thereof; according to which, it imports no more than an invisible and hidden place, being derived from the old Saxon word *hil*, which signifies

to hide, or from the participle thereof helled, that is to say, hidden or covered; as in the Western parts of England at this very day, to hele over any thing, signifies amongst the common people to cover it; and he that covereth an house with tile or slate, is called an *hellier*. From whence it appears that the word hell, according to its primitive notion, exactly answers to the Greek word *hades*, which signifies the common mansion of all separated souls, and was so called, *quasi hoidestopos*, because it is an unseen place, removed from the sight and view of the living; according to which, the translator of Irenæus renders it by "an invisible place;" very fitly so terming it, because of our uncertainty of the places whither departed souls do go, and of their invisibility unto us.

But, from the literal signification of the word, let us proceed to the thing itself; where I shall endeavor to prove, that amongst all the ancients, whether Heathens, Jews, or Christians, the usual acceptation of the term hell was, that it was the common lodge or habitation of separated souls, both good and bad, wherein each of them, according to their deserts in this life, and their expectations of the future judgment, remained either in joy or misery.

I place the Heathens with the Jews and Christians, because the propriety of any Greek or Latin word is to be fetched from them; and the apostles speaking the words of their language, it cannot be imagined, but that they spoke them according to their vulgar signification, intending always by them their usual and universal meaning.

Now that the Heathens, both Greeks and Latins, the one by their Hades, and the other by their Inferi, did generally understand the forementioned place of departed souls, needs no large or copious proof, seeing the least peruser of their writings must without doubt have observed this to have been their general opinion, that as upon the death of all men, whether just or unjust, the grave received their bodies, so hell received their souls: for the demonstrating whereof, there will be found sufficient in those books alone, that are usually read in Grammar schools; as in the beginning of Homer's Iliads, the poet invokes his muse to assist him in the description of the anger of Achilles, which was so fatal to the Greeks, that it sent many noble souls to hell, and made their carcasses a prey to the dogs."

And in the 11th book of his Odysses, Ulysses

gives a narration of his descent into *hades* or *hell*, which he describes to be the common place of souls separated from their bodies, where he met with several of his old acquaintance, and others, of whom he had heard, both good and bad; there he saw the souls of *Achilles*, *Agamemnon*, *Patroclus*, *Antilochus*, and others whose names are mentioned with honor and praise in the Pagan histories, as well as the souls of *Titius*, *Tantalus*, and *Sisyphus* whose memories are preserved with brands of infamy and reproach; there he beheld the soul of *Achilles* to skip with joy in a flowry meadow, whilst the souls of other dead men stood by in a mournful posture, relating their particular sufferings. Each of them being suitably affected to the sentence that had been passed on them by *Minos*, who in that infernal region judged all souls, according to their actions in the body, either to misery or felicity. *Æneas* also in imitation of *Ulysses* is feigned by *Virgil* to have gone down to *hell*, or to the habitation of departed souls, where he saw not only the proud giants who attempted to pull *Jupiter* out of heaven, the king of *Elis*, *Ixion*, *Pirithous*, and other great and abominable sinners, in the midst of unconceivable and tremendous torments, but also *Ilus*, *Assaracus*, *Dardanus*, *Anchises* and a multitude of other heroes, recreating them-

themselves in green meadows, amidst a full confluence of every thing that could make them blessed and happy. So that hell contained the separated souls of all men whether good or bad, whether adjudged to misery or felicity ; being divided into two parts, in the left whereof the ungodly are plagued and tormented for their sins and follies, as in the right the godly are rewarded and blessed for their duty and obedience ; according to those verses of Diphilus an old comical poet, preserved by Clemens Alexandrinus.

*For good and bad, two different paths are found
In hell ; both which are cover'd by the ground.*

Not much unlike to which, Virgil describes two paths in hell ; the right leading to the Elysian fields, or the habitation of the blessed ; the left, leading to Tartarus, or the place of the damned.

*The way in two divides : that on the right
By Pluto's walls, goes to the Elysian light :
That on the left doth unto torment tend,
And men to wicked Tartarus doth send.*

From all which it manifestly appears, that hell was a general term, and signified the place whereunto all separated souls, whether good or bad, were translated and carried, and there disposed of into two distinct mansions.

But from the Heathens let us come unto the Jews ; amongst we shall find the same sentiments to have prevailed, insomuch that St. Ambrose affirms, " that the Pagans stole the forementioned notion of the state of departed souls, from the Jews and the books of the old testament ; though he wishes, that they had not mingled other superstitious and unprofitable conceits therewith, but would have been contented with that single opinion, that souls delivered from their bodies, go to hades, or hell, that is, a place not seen, which is called by the Latins Infernum.

The Sadducees indeed denied angels, and spirits, and the world to come ; by which, as Josephus writes, " they took away the rewards and punishments of souls in hell ;" but the Pharisees, who were the prevailing and far more numerous sect, " believed the immortality of souls, and that they were either tormented or honored under the earth," that is, in hell, " according to the virtue or wickedness of their past lives." In an agreement whereunto, the learned Huetius observes in his notes on the commentaries of Origen, " that the modern Jews distinguish between the superior Paradise, or heaven, which is prepared for the glorified souls and bodies of the saints, after the resurrection-day, and the in-

Senior Paradise usually called by them the Garden of Eden, which is appointed to be the habitation of holy souls during the time of their separation from their bodies :” according unto which, in the Jewish liturgy, there is a prayer prescribed to be said in time of sickness, wherein the sickman prays, “ that if the time of his departure be come, God would give him his portion in the Garden of Eden, and purify him for the world to come, the hidden place of the righteous ;” which exactly answers the Greek word *hades*, which as it hath been already said, signifies “ an hidden or unseen place :” and, in one of the following prayers, called *Hakaphoth*, or Encompassings, because the elders encompass and go round the grave of the buried person ; in their petition for them, they first pray, “ that the departed soul may go to the Garden of Eden, and that from thence he may ascend on high and not stay without.” But whether the modern Jews universally concur herein, is not necessary for me to enquire, seeing my design leads me only to the consideration of the sentiments of the ancient Jews ; concerning whom, one well versed in their opinions, I mean father Richard Simon, assures us, “ that in the days of our Saviour and his apostles, their common belief was that there were places under ground, whither souls went, after

they were separated from their bodies.¹⁷ And a learned man long before him, even Origen, affirms, “ that the Jews were instructed from their infancy, in the immortality of the soul, and that under the earth, that is, in hell, there are both judgments and rewards according to men’s merits and deserts in this life.”¹⁸ From all which it doth most evidently appear, that the ancient Jews as well as Heathens, understood by hades, or hell, the place whither all separated souls do go, and there live according to their different qualities and merits either in a state of joy or misery.

But, that which nearly concerns me, is the opinion of the primitive Christians herein ; which after an unprejudiced enquiry, I find to have been almost, if not altogether the same with that of Heathens and Jews, viz. that hell was the common receptacle of all departed souls, whether good or bad, being divided into two mansions or habitations ; in one whereof, the souls of the wicked remained in grief and torment ; and in the other, those of the godly in joy and happiness ; both of them expecting the general resurrection-day.

Now, that they believed the separated souls of the wicked to have immediately passed into a place of punishment and anguish, requires no proof, at least it will be needless for me to insist upon it ; but seeing it will be proved,

that they maintained, that even the souls of the faithful went to hell, it will be necessary, by reason that that word is now always taken in an evil sense, and so without a previous caution may possibly create wrong ideas and misapprehensions in some peoples minds, as if it would insinuate, that the separated souls of the godly suffer the pains of hell, or at least pass through the flames of a pretended purgatory: I say, upon these and the like accounts, it will not be unnecessary, before I come to evince this main point, that the ancients placed believing souls in hells, briefly to shew, that notwithstanding this, they affirmed them to be there in a state of rest and peace, in a full complacency of spirit, joyfully expecting the restitution of all things, and the general resurrection-day, when their happiness should be completed in the highest heaven.

Archelaus, bishop of Caschara in Mesopotamia, though he supposes "both Dives and Lazarus to have been in hell," yet maintains, "that the latter was there in a place of rest:" for which reason, Origen calls him "the rest-er in Abraham's bosom;" and Clemens Alexandrinus, "that he flourished in the bosom of father Abraham;" upon which account Hilary of Poictiers very well argues, "that our Saviour could not fear to enter into the infernal

chaos, seeing Lazarus rejoiced in Abraham's bosom." And from the same consideration, Cyprian comforted the Christians of his age against the fear of death, and exhorted them cheerfully to receive it; "let us embrace," saith he, "the day that assigns to every one his habitation, that delivers us from these worldly snares, and restores us to the heavenly kingdom: who being abroad, would not hasten to return into his own country? Who, hastening to sail home, would not heartily wish for a good wind, that he might speedily embrace his friends? We may reckon paradise for our country; we have begun already to have the patriarchs for our parents; why then do we not hasten and run to see our country, and to salute our parents? A great number of friends expect us there; a numerous company of parents, brethren and sons, desire us, already secure of their own immortality, but now solicitous about our salvation. How great must their and our joy be, in the mutual seeing and embracing of each other? What must be the pleasure of the heavenly kingdoms, where there is no fear of death, but a certainty of eternal life? There is a glorious choir of the apostles, there is the number of the exulting prophets, there is the innumerable company of martyrs, crowned for the vic-

tory of their fight and passion; there are the triumphing Virgins, who by the strength of continency subdued the concupiscence of the flesh and body; there are the charitable, who are rewarded for their works of righteousness, in feeding and giving to the poor; who by heaping the precepts of the Lord, conveyed their earthly patrimony unto the heavenly treasury: To these, dearly beloved brethren, let us hasten, and wish to be speedily with these, that so we may speedily come to Christ." And many other such like passages might be easily produced, to shew the opinion of the primitive writers to have been; that the souls of the godly, immediately after their separation from the body, pass into a place of bliss and happiness: but that I may not be tedious, I shall designedly omit them, and proceed to the proof of the principal point, which is, that it was the general belief of the primitive church, that the separated souls of good men went into hell, or hades, as it is termed in the creed, where they remained in a condition suitable to their merits in this life, in an expectation of the resurrection, and the general judgment-day.

Now the first, whom I shall produce for this end, shall be the venerable Irenæus, bishop

of Lyons, who relates this to be the order of the resurrection and glorification of all true Christians, "that upon the disunion of their two essential parts by death, their souls shall go to hell, or to an invisible place appointed them by God, where they shall tarry till the resurrection, in a continued expectation of it; after which, receiving their bodies, and rising perfectly, that is, corporally, they shall come to the presence of God." Not much unlike to which, it is affirmed by Justin Martyr, "that all souls did not die, but that those of the godly remained in a better place, and those of the ungodly in a worse, expecting the day of judgment."

Tertullian writes, "that both Dives and Lazarus, or Eleazar," as he calls him, "were in hell, the former in the torment of fire, the latter in a place of refreshment, viz. in Abraham's bosom;" making Abraham's bosom to be a part of hell, according to those verses against Marcion, which commonly pass under his name:

"Sub corpore terra
 In parte ignotâ quidam locus entat apertus,
 Luce suâ fretus, Abrahæ sinus iste vocatur,
 Altior à tenebris, longe semotus ab igne
 Sub terrâ tamen hac, &c.

In which verses, he comprehends the place of damned and blessed souls under the general

turn of the word hell, or of a place under ground; only making this difference, that the wicked were in the lowermost parts thereof, in a place of darkness, fire and torment; but the righteous in the superior parts thereof, in a place of light, freedom and happiness.

But, to return to the unquestionable works of Tertullian, in his book concerning the soul; he proposes to dispute of several questions relating to it; one whereof is, concerning the corporiety of the soul, which he holds in the affirmative, and thinks it undeniably evinced from the soul's passivity, or receptibility either of joy or misery in its separate state; for the proof of which, he doth not only alledge the example of Dives and Lazarus, but also the detaining of all souls in hell, both good and bad, till the judgment-day; "what is that, saith he, that is translated unto hell after the divorce of the body, which is there detained, and reserved unto the day of judgment, to which Christ by dying did descend? Even to the souls of the patriarchs, I think. How if the soul be nothing, can it be detained under the earth? For, it is nothing if it be not a body; for, incorporiety is free from all kind of custody, and incapable of either pain or pleasure." And, in the same book, one of

the last questions which he handles relating to the soul, is concerning its receptacle after its separation from the body ; where he first proposes the various opinions of those philosophers, who acknowledged its immortality, as of the Platonists, Stoicks, and others, who generally allotted to wise and pious souls, seats exalted in the air, sublimated according to their wisdom and excellency, but maintained, that other souls were, according to their folly and corruption, depressed towards the earth, and hovered thereabouts ; which conceit he condemns, as contrary to that part of the Christian faith which placed all souls in hell : “ For, as for us, saith he, we never believe hell to be a naked cavity, nor an open sink of the world, but it is a vastness in the body and depth of the earth, and an abstruse profundity in its bowels ; for we read, that Christ was conquered by death, three days in the heart of the earth, that is, in its most inward and internal recess, covered over by the earth, shut within it, and built about by yet more inferior abysses :” And a little farther, he professedly debates that question, “ Whether all souls go to hell,” which he positively affirms ; referring his reader to a book, now lost, which he had formerly written concerning Paradise, wherein he had declared, That every soul was sequestered in hell till the day

of judgment ;” adding for a farther confirmation thereof, “ that Christ, because he was man, was not only dead and buried according to the scriptures, but that he also satisfied this law of descending into hell, and did not ascend into the heights of heaven before he had descended into the depths of the earth, that there the patriarchs and prophets might enjoy him ;” And in the same chapter he continues to write, “ that heaven is not yet opened to any, the earth, or hell, being yet shut, but, that at the end of the world the kingdom of heaven shall be unlocked ;” And in the next chapter, he mentions it as the common belief of the Christians in his age, that all souls went to hell ; and speaks both with horror and derision of the impious practices of the followers of Simon Magus, that they pretended by their magical arts “ to bring the souls of the prophets from hell ;” since, whatsoever spectrums or visions appeared, they were not real souls, but only their resemblances and phantasms ; “ it being impossible for any soul to come out of hell before the judgment-day, as our Lord, in the person of Abraham hath appointed in the parable of the comforted poor man, and tormented rich man, that no soul shall pass from hell to earth :” Wherefore he concludes in the next and last chapter, “ that

all souls are in hell, that there are both punishments and rewards, that both Dives and Lazarus are there; that the soul is both punished and comforted in hell, in expectation of the future judgment."

To Tertullian, the Sibylline oracles may be subjoined, which seem to be a pious fraud of some good intentioned Christian, compiled, probably, about the latter end of the second century in the time of the emperor Commodus, wherein all men who live upon the face of the earth, are said to go down to the house of hades, or to hell.

All men who in this world do dwell,

Must go to the unseen gates of hell.

Novation discoursing of the perfection of the creation, shews that all parts thereof are full of the wonders of God's workmanship, not only the heavens above and the earth beneath, but even "those places which lye under the earth, are not empty of distinguished and ordered powers; for that is the place whither the souls both of the godly and ungodly are led, receiving the fore-judgment of their future doom."

Archelaus, bishop of Caschara in Mesopotamia, writes concerning Dives and Lazarus, "That they both died and descended into hell."

Lactantius warns his readers, "That none of them should think, that souls were immediately judged after death ; for they are all detained in one common custody, till the time shall come when the greatest judge shall examine their respective merits.

Athanasius commends and admires the courage of the martyrs, who, for the sake of Christ, did not fear to undergo all hardships and miseries ; and though many of them had weak and infirm bodies, yet they greedily snatched at death, not recoiling at the corruption of their bodies, nor "fearing the paths in hell."

Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, affirms it to be "the necessary law of nature, that bodies should be buried, and that souls should descend into hell ;" wherefore the souls of the faithful when they "are loosed from their bodies, are reserved for an entrance into the heavenly kingdom by the custody of the Lord, to wit, in the bosom of Abraham, unto which a great gulf hinders the wicked from approaching : " And in another place he writes, that immediately after death, the soul of every man goes either to a place of bliss or woe ; " of which the rich and poor man in the gospel, are witnesses ; the one of whom the angels

placed in the seat of the faithful, even in Abraham's bosom, whilst the region of punishment presently received the other. The day of judgment is a retribution either of eternal blessedness or punishment; but the time of death detains every one under its laws, whilst it reserves every one for judgment, either in the bosom of Abraham, or in punishment."

St. Jerome seems also in some places, to be of the same opinion; as where he "puts this difference between death and hell, that death is the separation of body and soul, but hell the place in which souls are reserved either in happiness or misery, according to the quality of their merits;" And in several places he saith, "That before the coming of Christ, all were alike conducted to hell."

St. Austin writes, that the "time which is interposed between a man's death and the last resurrection, containeth souls in hidden receptacles, according as every one is worthy either of rest or labor."

But here it must not be dissembled or concealed, that in the declension of the Greek and Latin tongues, the words *hades* and *inferi* became to be chiefly understood in an evil sense, especially in the Latin tongue, where it came to be for the most part, peculiarly ap-

placed to the place and state of depart-wicked souls; from whence we find amongst the Greeks, that in the days of Origen, some Christians could not imagine, that the saints before the coming of Christ, went to hell ;" unto whom the father replies, "That the servants were not greater than their masters, that it was no dishonor for them to go unto that place, whither the Lord himself went, who descended into hell, that he might conquer it, and deliver from thence the souls of the pious and godly ;" by which he hath opened for us a passage into Paradise, that so " we, who live in the end of the world, have this privilege beyond the ancient saints, that if we depart out of this life good and holy, we shall pass by the flaming sword at the entrance of Paradise, and shall not go unto that place, where those who died before the coming of Christ expected him, but shall pass by without receiving any harm from the flaming sword."

Where it is also evident, that Origen himself receded something from the opinion generally received in the church, in that he would not allow the souls of the godly to go to hell since the resurrection of Christ, as he acknowledged they did before ; but sent them to Paradise, which he assigned to be in a different place from hell, and not in hell, as o-

been already proved, That as after death the bodies of the faithful remained in the grave, so the souls continued in hell till the general resurrection-day, when their happiness should be compleated and perfected in the highest heavens; which doctrine, as we also see, hath with very little alteration, been preserved in the Eastern churches for these sixteen hundred years.

But in the Western church, it hath been otherwise; where, as the Latin tongue declined, the word *infern*i or hell, was more and more used in an evil sense, till at length it came to be wholly appropriated to signify a place of torments, or at least of some kind of misery and obscurity.

St. Ambrose was one of the first in the West, who varied from the ancient doctrine, and embraced the opinion of Origen, concerning the place of the departed souls of good men, which was, that "before the death of Christ the souls of all the patriarchs and saints went to hell, where they remained in joy and happiness till our Saviour's death; when his separated soul came into those infernal regions, and breaking the bond thereof, he freed those captive souls, and at his resurrection triumphantly led them into heaven;

into which place the departed souls of all believers do now immediately and instantly go."

After him, St. Jerome entertained the same notions, that "before the death of Christ, all souls were alike conveyed to hell; that Abraham's bosom, where Lazarus rested in peace and joy, was a part thereof; that Jacob, Job, Samuel, and all the other saints who lived under the legal dispensation, were detained in hell, till the gospel opened the gates of Paradise, and our Saviour's blood quenched the flaming sword at the entrance thereof, when the thief entered with our Lord thereinto; after whom followed into that holy city, the souls of all the saints who had been before detained in hell, and unto which heavenly place, the souls of all good men immediately, upon their dissolution, do now instantly pass, being no longer held in hell since the resurrection of our Lord.

Austin seems to be sometimes wavering and uncertain in his apprehensions of this point; "I do not doubt, saith he, but that the rich man was in an extremity of torments, and the poor man in a confluence of joys; but how that flame of hell and bosom of Abraham is to be understood, will scarcely be found by humble seekers, never by contentious strivers."

In some places he doubts, whether Abraham's bosom, the receptacle of all faithful souls before the coming of Christ, was in hell or no ; " I must confess, saith he, that I have not yet found where he habitation of the souls of the just is in scripture called hell ; and as I have said, so I say again, that I never yet met with the word hell used in a good sense in the canonical scripture : " But, in other places he seems to grant, that Abraham's bosom, the mansion of the godly before the coming of Christ, was part of hell ; " whether Abraham, saith he, was in some parts of hell, I cannot well define ; for Christ was not as yet come to hell, that he might deliver from thence the souls of the precedent saints ; it is probable that there were two hells, divided by the great gulph ; in one whereof, the souls of the just were at peace, whilst in the other, the souls of the wicked were tormented : " And, in his book of the City of God, composed in the extremity of his old age, he writes, that " it is not absurd to believe, that the ancient saints who believed in Christ to come, altho' they were in a place remote from torments, yet that they were in hell till the blood of Christ, and his descent thither delivered them from thence ; since which time, the souls of believers go to hell no more.

I might here farther add the sentiments of Petrus Chrysologus, Gennadius Massiliensis, Gregory the great, and several others of the succeeding writers, but I think it will be an unnecessary as well as tedious labor, seeing the generality of the Latin fathers of the middle ages, embraced the forementioned notion of Origen, Ambrose, and others, which was occasioned through the mutation and declension of the Latin tongue, whereby the word *inferi*, or hell, received a considerable change in its meaning and signification, being for the most part taken in an evil sense ; according to which apprehension and notion thereof, new ways and ends of our Saviour's descent thither, were imagined and invented. But, as I have already shewn, the word hell, according to its primary and original import, doth principally signify no other than the state or place into which all separated souls do pass, and there remain till the resurrection-day ; in which sense it is to be frequently understood in the Septuagint, and cannot in any propriety of speech be otherwise accepted in that text, whereon this article of the creed is founded, viz. Acts ii. 27. " Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption," because the soul's being in hell, is there opposed to and distin-

quished from the bodies being in the state ; and being applied by the apostle to our Saviour's resurrection, it is as if he should have thus expressed it in other words, that although Christ Jesus died, and according to the manner of all mankind, his soul went into hell, the common receptacle of all disunited spirits, and his body was buried in the grave ; yet God raised his body from the corruption of the one and loosened his soul from the bonds of the other, re-uniting those two essential parts in a most wonderful and glorious resurrection ; according to which pattern of our Lord and Saviour, all his followers shall, at the time appointed by the Almighty, be rescued both in body and soul from the power of the grave and hell ; when, as the apostle writes, " shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting ?" O grave, or, O hell, as it is in the Greek, being the same word that is used in the creed, where is thy victory ? That is, at the resurrection-day, through the omnipotent power of God, the grave shall be forced to yield up her dead bodies, and hell her separated souls, that so all souls and bodies being re-united, they may in their perfect humanity stand before the tribunal of Jesus Christ, and receive a sentence suitable to their works in the flesh, and the execution of that

sentence throughout a never ending life, either in eternal misery or felicity ; which is the exact description given by St. John, of the general resurrection and judgment-day, in Rev. xx. 13, 14. " And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works ; and death and hell were cast into the lake of fire ; this is the second death ;" that is, death or the grave surrendered her imprisoned bodies and hell her detained souls, after which their empire and power over the children of men was destroyed and annihilated : From all which it appears most evident, that the chief and proper signification of the word hell, is no other than the place of separated souls ; and that by consequence, the " descending of Christ into hell," imports no more than the passage of his soul to that invisible world of separated spirits, where according to the laws of God and nature, it remained in rest and peace till his resurrection-day.

But then secondly, the next thing to be enquired into for the full explication of this article, is the manner of our Saviour's going into hell, which in the creed is expressed by *descending thither, katelthen eis hadou, he descended into hell.*

Now as for this word *katelthen*, translated *descended*, archbishop Usher assures us, "that in the Acts of the apostles it is used ten times, and in none of all those places signifieth any descending from an higher place unto a lower, but a removing simply from one place unto another; whereupon, the vulgar Latin edition doth render it there by the general terms of *abeo, venio, devenio, supervenio*; and where it retaineth the word *descendo*, it intendeth nothing less than to signify thereby the lower situation of the place unto which the removal is noted to be made; if descending therefore in the Acts of the apostles (as the said archbishop continue to write,) imply no such kind or thing, what necessity is there, that thus of force it must be interpreted in the creed of the apostles?" So that, according to this interpretation, the word *descended* implies no more than the simple passage of the soul of Christ into hell, the habitation and mansion of all severed and disunited spirits.

And the reason of the use of this word beyond any other, was, because it was a vulgar expression and a popular kind of speech, arising from the generally received opinion, that the receptacles of departed souls were under the earth, or in the heart and bowels thereof; whence called by the Latins *Infernum*, and

the Greeks *katakthonia*, and *ta katotera*, that is, the nether and lower parts; and *ades* and *aiides*, that invisible, because those places imperceptible and unseen by the living; according to which received opinion, of the ancients, the fathers also generally believed hell to be either under the earth, or in the recesses of it; in which belief they were there confirmed from that in resemblance to the prophet Jonah, who in his soul as well as body, was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; the son of man was to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," as it is in Matth. xii. 40. which is a proof that they generally applied to our Saviour's soul, during the three days of its separation from his body.

About the beginning of the prophet Jonah's coming out of the fish's belly, there is this expression, [Jonah ii. 3.] "for thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; where, what we render "in the midst," St. Jerome more exactly translates it, "in the midst of the seas;" and on it writes, "that by the heart of the sea, hell is signified; for which we read in the gospel, the heart of the earth, for, as the heart of an animal is in the midst thereof, so hell is supposed to be in the midst of the earth:" for the proof of which,

- he elsewhere produces that text of the Psalmist, in Psal. cvi. 17. "the earth opened, and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram;" and that passage of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xiv. 15. "yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit," and long before St. Jerome, Tertullian calls hell "a subterranean region, a vastness in the body and depth of the earth, and an abstruse profundity in its bowels;" and Novatian affirms it to be "a place beneath the earth, whither the souls both of the godly and ungodly are led, receiving in themselves the previous apprehensions of their future doom;" with which agrees the prediction of Sibylla, that at the dissolution of all things by the general conflagration at the last day, a great river of burning flames shall descend from heaven, and burn up every place without the confines thereof; amongst which she reckons not only earth and sea, rivers and fountains, but also unmerciful hades or hell.

Irænaeus, Damascen, and others, believed it also to be "a place under the earth;" and Origen likewise one where terms it "a place under ground;" though he elsewhere speaks very doubtfully and uncertainly of the situation thereof, as when he writes, "that Christ descended into hell, wheresoever it be, or, in what place soever it is."

And indeed, though every one believed hell to be the receptacle of all souls, yet they were not agreed in the exact situation thereof. Tertullian, wherein he is followed by the schoolmen, placeth it in the very bowels of the earth; Novatian, Damascen and others, fix it beneath the earth, *infra terram*, *hupo gene*, by which they understood the Southern hemisphere; which space we now find to be filled with earth and air, as our Northern one is: others knew not where to settle it; but in general, every one meant by it that place, where-soever it was, into which separated souls do pass; only whatsoever their particular opinion was, in conformity to the usual dialect and common manner of speaking, they termed a going thither "a descent into hell," as the fore-mentioned reverend archbishop instanceth in Cicero, who, "wherever he hath occasion to mention any thing that concerneth the dead, speaketh still of *inferi*, according to the vulgar phrase;" altho' he misliked the vulgar opinion which bred that manner of speaking, and professed it to be his judgment, "the souls when they depart out of the body, are carried up on high, and not downward unto any habitations under the earth."

So that when the creed affirms, that our Saviour "descended into hell," the meaning

thereof is no other than this, viz. that his so being separated from his body by a real transition and local motion, went into the unseen region of spirits, where, according to the law of death, it remained amongst other religious and pious departed souls till the resurrection of his body, which was the third day after.

Now that this is the true and proper signification of Christ's descending into hell, will be farther proved from the consideration of the ends for which he descended thither ; some of the most pertinent whereof to our present purpose, are as follows.

First, one end thereof, was to sanctify and sweeten unto us the state of separation ; to abate its dread and terror, and to render it the more comfortable and joyful, in that our head and Saviour endured it before us ; for, as Irenæus observes, after that our Lord had passed through the several ages of man's life to sanctify them unto us, he " at length came unto death, that he might be the first-born of the dead, and have the pre-eminency in all things according unto which Athanasius writes " that Christ condemned sin in his life on earth, took away the curse on the cross, corruption in the grave, and death in his descent into hell, passing through every place, and

appearing in our several conditions, that he might work out the salvation of the whole man."

Secondly, our Saviour descended into hell, because it was a necessary and principal part of his humiliation; for, though his soul was, and the souls of all good men now are in a place of bliss and happiness, yet as long as they continue in their state of separation, they are suffering under the effects of sin, from which they shall not be delivered till the resurrection-day, when death and hell, the executioners of sin, shall lose their sting and victory; according unto which, Irenæus writes, "that as Christ arose from the dead, so the bodies of all good men shall be raised, when the time of their condemnation for sin shall be completed;" and, Athanasius describes the "souls of Adam and other good men, held under the condemnation of death, to be crying unto the Lord in that state of separation for his mercy and pity." And the said father elsewhere remarks, that whereas, when man fell by the eating of the forbidden fruit, the righteous judge pronounced a double sentence upon him, the one relating unto his body, the other unto his soul; that respecting his body being comprehended in those words, dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return;" and that respecting his

soul in these words, " thou shalt die the death ;" so when a Saviour was sent to redeem him that he might in his own person undergo the same punishment, he permitted his dead body to be laid in the grave, and with his soul he went into that place of separation, whither the souls of all men were adjudged to go, whereby likening himself to us in those states and conditions, he thereby redeemed us from them.

Thirdly, another end of *Christ's descent into hell*, was to conquer it in his own person, and as the head and representative of his church and people ; that the loosing of his soul from the bonds thereof, might be an earnest and assurance to all his followers, that at the appointed time of their resurrection, their souls should be also rescued through his almighty power, and obtain an eternal victory over death and hell ; from whence the ancients represented our Saviour like a mighty champion entering the territories of hell, and " fighting for the space of three days with him, till he had broken the strength of his malice," and quite destroyed his power and force, setting himself free from all his bonds and fetters, and rendering them unable to detain his saints whensoever it shall please him to command them thence ; for a declaration and manifes-

tation whereof, he brought with him at his resurrection; several holy souls from that state of separation, and re-united them unto their bodies, who afterwards [Matth. xxvii. 53.] "came into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

Thus Epiphanius writes, "that our Lord descended with his soul into the nethermost parts, where death and hell being ignorant of his divinity that accompanied him, assaulted his soul, thinking to have conquered it as they had the rest of mankind before; but that herein they were mistaken, seeing that it was impossible for his soul, by reason of his deity, to be holden by them:" for, as the said father writes elsewhere "he broke the sting of death, rent in sunder those adamantine bars, and by his own power loosed the bonds of hell," bringing from thence with him some of those captive souls, as a pledge and firm foundation of hope to all whom he left behind, that in his own due time they should also arrive unto the same liberty and resurrection with the others, which is the same with what Sibylla sings.

*He shall descend unto the gates of hell,
Declaring hope to those who there do dwell.*

Athanasius writes, "that the soul of Christ went into hell to break the bonds of the souls

who were detained there, fixing or ordaining the time of their resurrection; and that he conquered the grave and hell, that where corruption had been sown, there incorruption should arise; and where death had reigned, there he appearing with his human soul, should exhibit immortality, and so should make us partakers of his incorruption, in hopes of the resurrection from the dead, when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality."

Lastly, the chief and principal end of our Saviour's *descent into hell* was, that he might subject himself unto the laws of death, and be in every thing conformable unto us; for seeing that he became our high priest to redeem and save us, it behoved him in all things to be made like unto us, sin only excepted. Wherefore when he died, his body like unto ours, was committed to the grave; and in the same manner, his spirit fled to the receptacle of holy and religious souls, where, as all we must, it awaited his resurrection-day; and which is very observable, amongst those infinite and various ends, which the ancients imagined, according to their different conceptions, to be the reason of this *descent*, they frequently alleged this to be the most proper and principal cause thereof.

Thus Irenæus writes, that our Lord by his abode in hell, "observed the law of the dead;" and Tertullian, that his body was not only buried, but that "he satisfied this law also, viz. that he underwent the manner of human death in hell;" and Athanasius writes, that "our death was described by the separation of the soul of Christ from his body, who being found in our shape and figure, underwent the manner of our death, that by it he might prepare a resurrection for us, shewing his soul in hell, and by his body in the grave, that being in hell the exhibition of his soul there, he might destroy it, and being in the grave by the burial of his body there, he might annihilate corruption, and so might bring forth immortality and incorruption from hell and the grave, going thither in our form and manner, and loosening our detention there."

Leo Magnus writes, that our Lord "by dying, underwent the laws of hell, as by rising again he did dissolve them;" and that I may not mention any more, Hilary of Poitiers assures us, that "to fulfil the nature of man, he subjected himself to death, that is, to a departure as it were, both of soul and body, and penetrated into the infernal seats, which was a thing that seemed to be due unto man;"

for, as he elsewhere writes, "it is a law of human necessity, that the bodies being buried, the souls should descend into hell, which descent the Lord did not refuse for the consummation of a perfect man."

So that one principal end of our Saviour's going into hell, was to undergo the laws of death, that in every thing both living and dying, and after death he might submit himself to the rules and states of that nature which he came down from heaven to redeem. In his life-time he appeared in the similitude of sinful flesh, not disdaining to undergo all the natural actions and infirmities thereof; at his death, his body was committed to the grave, whilst his separated soul fled unto the invisible world of departed spirits; which reason of his *descent into hell*, together with the others forementioned, is a more evident proof, that the meaning of this article in the creed is no other than this, viz. that our Saviour's soul being separated from his body by death, went unto the unseen mansion of separated spirits in the other world; that as his body according to the laws of death, was laid in the grave, so in a conformity thereunto, his soul also passed into the habitation of departed spirits, where it remained in its separate state amongst the souls of Abraham, Samuel, Da-

vid, and all the godly in rest and peace, till the day of his resurrection ; describing thereby unto all his followers, the manner of their death and resurrection, that their bodies must remain in the grave, and their souls in hell, or in their separate state, till the time of their resurrection, when they shall be raised to life again, and in their perfect manhood receive eternal honor and glory from him.

But, now having at large explained this article, and shewn the true and proper sense thereof, it yet remains to enquire into the occasion, manner, and time of its being inserted in the creed. Now that which gave occasion thereunto, was an heretical opinion of the Arians and Eunomians, but especially of the Apollinarians ; between whom and the two former, the difference was very small, if any at all in this particular, as shall be hereafter shewn.

These heretics violently assaulted the truth of our Saviour's humanity ; but as they were more subtle and learned than that gross and sottish tribe beforementioned, against whom our Lord's birth, passion, crucifixion, death and burrial, are inserted in the creed, so they managed their cause with greater wit and cunning, and proceeded in a more refined and politic

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accuseth them of maintaining, that "the heavenly mind in Christ served instead of an human soul;" and to the same purpose, Theodorit writes concerning both the Arians and Eunomians, that they "held, that our Saviour's godhead performed the office of the soul;" with whom, both Epiphanius and Austin agree in their charge against the Arians, affirming, that they held, "that Christ took only an human body without a soul."

But that which rendered this heresy the more considerable and dangerous, was, that it was defended and patronized by the great Apollinarius, the ornament and splendor of the church in that age; who, after he had been the most signalized champion for the faith, and an illustrious example of piety and virtue, unhappily espoused these and other notions, which caused him to be branded for an heretic in that and all succeeding generations.

This Apollinarius, of whom I am now speaking, was Apollinarius the younger, bishop of Laodicea; but whether of Laodicea in Syria, or of that in Phœnicia of Libanus, is not certainly known. He was by all esteemed the greatest man of his age both for learning and piety; a most accurate and nervous defender

learning; that in many volumes he had thrown heresies, and confuted errors to the faith; that in thirty large and books, he had most convincingly banished the calumnies of Porphyry; that it would have longed to recite all his works, by which he might have been equalled with the best builders of the church, had he not fallen into heresy." And Philostorgius the historiographer, gives this larger character of him, that "he, and Basil, and Gregory Nazianzen, defended the divinity of Christ more than any either before or after them; in comparison of whom, the great Athanasius was esteemed to be but a child; that they possessed only an extraordinary faculty both in speaking and writing, but their lives were so pure and innocent, that whosoever either saw or heard them speak, were drawn and persuaded to the truth, and that the most considered and

us, in the relation that he gives of his heresy, and most pathetically by Gregory Nazianzen, who speaking of the heresies of Eunomius and Apollinarius (the former of whom denied the divinity of our Saviour) saith, That the heresy of the first was supportable, and to be born withal, but that which "was most insupportable and sinking in all the ecclesiastical shipwrecks, was the error of Apollinarius," that so great and good a man, the ornament of his age, and flower of the church, should become an heretic, and an impugner of the Catholic faith.

As for the time when he began his heresy, it is not exactly known ; he was not anathematized as an heretic by name, till the second general council at Constantinople, anno 381 ; but nineteen years before that, viz. anno 362, his heresy was condemned by a synod at Alexandria, whereat were present Athanasius, Eusebius, bishop of Verceil in Piedmont, with several others, without mentioning his name ; the reason whereof might be, either because some Monks were sent by him thither, to purge him from the suspicion of heresy, as in the relation of the synod there is room enough for such a conjecture, or, because they were loth to believe so great a doctor of the church could fall into so foul an heresy. Epiphanius

writes, than when he first heard of this error, by some who came from him, he could not believe that such a man had espoused such heretical notions, and that they were only "some peoples mistaken apprehensions, who could not fathom the depth and profundity of so great a scholar;" or else they were, unwilling to cast so eminent a man from the communion of the church, and therefore would first condemn his heresy without mentioning his name, hoping that that might be a means to regain him to the Catholic faith, of which he had been before so noted and strenuous a defender: but now, how long before this synod he had vented his heresy, is not certainly known; only it could not be long, and not above three or four years at farthest.

Now that heresy of Apollinarius, which respects our present purpose, was according to St. Austin's expression, that "Christ assumed flesh without a soul;" or, as Cassian words it, that he "had not an human soul, or a rational soul;" for they allowed him such a sensitive soul as is in brutes, but denied him to have a reasonable one, as Vincentius Lirinensis writes, that "Apollinarius affirmed, that there was not in our Saviour's body an human soul, at least not such an one wherein was mind and reason," but that "instead thereof his

divinity supplied its room and place ;" so that in short, the error of Apollinarius was this, that though Christ in his becoming man, was *ensarkos*, that is, was incarnate, had real flesh and a substantial body ; yet he was not *emp-sukhometos*, that is, he had no reasonable human soul, but his divinity performed all the actions and offices thereof.

Which heresy the fathers apprehended to be attended with most dreadful consequences ; for if Christ had been destitute of an human soul, and the place thereof had been supplied by his deity, then several actions, as desiring, grieving, and the like, would have been most impiously attributed by the holy scriptures unto his divine nature ; which argument is urged to very good purpose by Epiphanius against these heretics ; and Athanasius most pertinently asks them, how Christ could be sorrowful and troubled (as it is said of him in John xiii. 21. that he was troubled in spirit) if he had not " had an human soul ? for to ascribe that to insensible matter, was ridiculous, or to the immutable godhead, was blasphemous."

Besides, if Christ had been void of a reasonable soul, he would not have had the whole essence of man, his humanity would have

been defective and imperfect : on which account Vincentius Lirinensis anathematizes Apollinarius for " taking away the property of the perfect humanity ;" and Epiphanius accuses his followers " of making the incarnation of Christ imperfect, by holding, that he did not assume a soul : " And it is observed by Theodorit, that in the synodical epistle of the second general council held at Constantino-ple, this heresy of the Apollinarians was condemned by these words, " We retain the doctrine of our Lord's incarnation uncorrupted, neither believing his body to be without a soul or mind, or his humanity to be imperfect ; " which it would have been, if he had only assumed a body ; for, by wanting a soul, he would have had but half the nature of man : Upon which, this farther consequence seems to follow, that he would have been but a partial redeemer, and have only saved the body, whilst he left the soul to perish and be undone.

Clemens Romanus writes, that Christ gave " his flesh for our flesh, and his soul for our soul : " But, these heretics by denying our Lord an human soul, by consequence rendered his salvation defective and incomplete, and confined it solely to the sensitive and bodily

part of man ; for as Athanasius proves against them, one thing could not be redeemed by another different therefrom ; but “ the body must be given for the body, and the soul for the soul ;” upon which account it is affirmed by Theodoret, that Apollinarius “ denied salvation to the rational soul, by which the body is governed ; for if according to his opinion, God the word did not assume it, he could not then either relieve it, or impart honor to it :” And therefore Damasus, bishop of Rome, in the synodical epistle, which he writ on purpose to condemn this heresy, asserts in opposition thereunto, that Christ the son of God, our Lord, by his passion “ brought such full salvation to mankind, that he freed the whole man which was entangled by sin, from all iniquity :” And in another synodical epistle penned before this at Alexandria, anno 362, in contradiction to this necessary consequence of this heresy, Christ is declared to be the Saviour of the whole man, “ not of the body only, but also of the soul.”

These then being apprehended to be the natural consequences of this heretical opinion, which was advanced by a person of an extraordinary esteem both for learning and piety, and so more probable to insnare and infect others, it cannot be imagined but that the go-

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vy," that he must needs have had a reasonable soul, seeing not only his divinity, but also his body was incapable of sorrow, being in its self but insensible matter : unto this the Apollinarians rejoined, " that it might be well enough understood of the body, that that was perceptive and sensible of suffering : " an example whereof is found in brutes, who though they have no rational souls, yet appear to be capable both of sensation and passion. And so for other arguments with which the fathers oppugned this heresy, the abettors thereof made a shift to frame some kind of tolerable reply thereto. But against this reason no possible answer could be imagined, or the least shadow of an argument invented ; for if *Christ descended into hell*, what was it of him that went thither ? It could not be his deity ; for that is omnipresent, and was in hell before as well as elsewhere, and therefore could not now make a local transition thither ; neither could it be his body, for that was committed to the grave, and under safe custody confined there : it remains therefore of necessity, that it must be his soul ; on which it doth as necessarily follow, that that soul must be reasonable and human, since the souls of brutes expire and die with their bodies, and only the souls of men survive and live in a separate

state, and go into hell, or the common lodge of all such severed and disunited spirits.

This argument therefore being so unanswerable, we find it frequently urged by the ancients against this heresy, as by Epiphanius in his confutation thereof, and by Theodoret, in one of whose dialogues, when he that supplied the place of an orthodox Christian asked the other, "if," saith he, "I should say, that Christ assumed a body without a soul, and that his divinity being united to his body, performed all the offices thereof, with what reasons would you confute me?" To which, when the respondent answered, that he would confute him from several texts of the holy scripture, and in particular from that text of the Psalmist, "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption;" he replied unto him, "that he had most aptly and pertinently cited those testimonies." But more especially is this argument managed for this end by Athanasius, who affirms the death of Christ to have been a most evident demonstration, that he had an human soul as well as body; "for," saith he, "when his body went no farther than the grave, his soul pierced even into hell; and whilst the grave received his corporal part, hell received that which was incorporeal:"

And therefore he thus interrogates the Apollinarians, "how then will you say, that there was an heavenly mind in Christ instead of an human soul? Was his body divided into two parts? Did one part appear in the grave, and another in hell? How was it possible for him without a soul to descend into hell?" Where you see, that he makes it to be ridiculous and absurd to affirm, that our Saviour's body went into hell, since that was committed to the grave; after which he proceeds to prove, that it was impious and blasphemous to attribute it to his divinity; "how could the word," saith he, "descend into hell, or demonstrate the resurrection therefrom? Did he supply the place of our souls, that he might fashion the image of our resurrection? How is it possible to imagine such things concerning God? Such reasonings are altogether contrary to the holy scriptures:" for, if this were true, it would follow, "that the divinity should be raised; for it is necessary, that some one should begin the resurrection from hell, that so there may be a perfect resurrection, a dissolution of death, and a dismissal of the spirits held there: Now, saith he, if the word underwent this, what is become of that necessary attribute of the deity, viz. immutability and unchangeableness?" In all which quotations, we may observe the force of Athanasius's argument to

lye here, that seeing *Christ descended into hell*, and that it was impious to ascribe that action to his divinity, and absurd to attribute it to his body, that therefore of necessity he had an human soul, by which he performed that descent in the same manner as the rest of mankind do: upon which account, the author of the dialogues concerning the holy trinity, extant amongst the works of Athanasius, in that dialogue, which is professedly against these heretics, affirms: "that Christ could not be in hell without an human soul;" and that as he could not be in the grave without a body, so neither "could he be in hell without a soul."

But this article of the *descent into hell*, was not only pitched upon to be inserted in the creed, because of its aptness and pertinency to contradict and refute this heresy, but the introducers of it might probably have had this also in their view, viz. that it naturally falls in with the passion and humiliation of Christ, without disturbing the order of the ancient creed, or causing any very sensible variation therefrom; and methodically continues on the same argument with the precedent actions of our Saviour recorded in the creed, viz. the proof and declaration of his incarnation and humanity; only with this difference, that whereas the former assert the reality of his

human body, this proves the certainty of his reasonable soul; that he was a perfect man, consisting of spirit as well as flesh, being thereby prepared to be a complete Saviour of all his followers both of soul and body.

Now as for the time when this article was introduced into the Catholic symbol, it must be confessed to have been very late: the first creed wherein it is usually thought to be found, is in that of the church of Aquileia, repeated by Ruffinus, who withal assures us, "that at that time this clause was neither in the Roman nor oriental creeds:" by which I suppose, he means the public creeds used by those churches at baptism, seeing I find it before his time in the particular creed of a private father, viz. of Epiphanius, or rather in an exposition of the creed, by him, where, after the death and burial of Christ, it follows, "that his godhead accompanied his holy soul into hell, and by his own power loosened the pains thereof;" as also in the creed of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, wherein it is recited, "that Christ suffered, was crucified, and buried, and descended into the nethermost parts." But, putting aside these two creeds, the *descent into hell* is not to be found in any Catholic creed, whether public or private, till the time of Ruffinus, which was about four hundred years af-

ter Christ, I say, in any Catholic creed, because it was introduced some time before, by a party of Arians, in their creed proposed at the great council of Ariminum, held under the emperor Constantius, Anno 359, and confirmed by him: the consideration of the temper and disposition of which council, may give us some light into the occasion and manner of the introduction thereof.

Now it is well known, that at that synod the Arians employed the greatest dexterity and cunning to buoy up their cause and to depress that of the orthodox, making use of all proper means thereunto, as by disguising their own tenets, unfairly representing the opinions of others, and above all, endeavoring to lessen the authority of the Nicene council, and to antiquate the form of faith appointed thereby: for which end, they drew up a new formula-ry, wherein the word *ousia*, or substance, that the son was of the same substance with the father, which was part of the Nicene creed, was wholly omitted, under pretence, that that word being not in scripture, it was very unfit to be made part of a creed, and that more especially, because it had been found by past experience, that it did rather distract than satisfy mens understandings and apprehensions. But now lest this should too much alarm the

orthodox, whom they were willing to keep quiet and lull asleep, they inserted other words, which did seem sufficiently to express their detestation of the Arian heresy, as that "Christ was the only begotten son of God, begotten of him before all time, God of God, in every thing like unto his father who begot him:" And to make sure work, that they might in all points appear to abandon the heresy of Arius, and all his followers, and approve themselves to be truly orthodox, they did not content themselves with a pretended denial of his heresy, which related to the divinity of the son of God; but they also added in the confession of their faith, that our Lord *descended into hell*, designing thereby to purge themselves from the imputation of denying Christ's human soul; which the Lucianistæ, and others of them did, but probably they themselves did not; that so by protesting heartily and sincerely against one heresy, of which they were suspected, they might be the more easily credited as to their denial of the rest: and thus as on the one hand they cleared and vindicated themselves, so it is not improbable, but that on the one hand they had an eye to Apollinarius their great impugner, (who had very likely about this time, given some jealousies of his inclination to the forementioned

heresy,) and threw in this article on purpose to confound the orthodox, by affording them a subject of new debates between themselves, and to disgrace Apollinarius, and by a too usual, though a most unreasonable consequence, the Catholic faith itself, of which he had been hitherto a most noted and eminent defender. Now I say, for these and such like reasons, it is most probable, that in the confession of the Arians at Ariminum, mention is not only made of "Christ's being crucified and dead, but also that he descended into hell, to perform those things which were necessary for him there to do, at whose sight the porters of hell trembled:" and the year following, the Acaicians, a particular sect of the Arians, in a synod at Constantinople, assented to the fore-said confession of Ariminum, with some few explications and additions; amongst which they added the word "buried," and thus read that which relates to the humiliation of Christ, "crucified, dead, and buried, descended into the nethermost parts, whom hell also feared:" after which, Apollinarius declaring himself more openly for this heresy, the orthodox found themselves under a necessity of abandoning and renouncing him; wherefore, his heresy was condemned by a synod at Alexandria, Anno 362, and by another at Rome, An-

no 373: and last of all according to the example given them by the Arians, an antidote was inserted there-against in the creed, and the reality of Christ's rational soul was declared by that undeniable argument of his *descending into hell*; as in Epiphanius's exposition of the creed, after our Saviour's death and burial, it follows: "that his deity accompanied his soul into hell, delivered from thence the captive souls, broke the sting of death, rent in sunder those bars and adamantine chains, and by his power loosened the bonds of hell; from whence he returned with his soul, not leaving his soul in hell, nor suffering his flesh to see corruption:" and St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes on this article, "that our Saviour descended into the lower parts, that from thence he might redeem the just:" after which, the first creed wherein we find this article, is in that of Aquileia, recorded by Ruffinus, in which indeed this clause is expressed with greater latitude than in our modern symbol, it being there, *descendit ad inferna*, or, *he descended into the lower parts*; wherein the burial might be included and designed, and that more especially because the sepulture of our Saviour is not therein expressed; but immediately after his crucifixion under Pontius Pilate, comes this clause, that he

descended into the lower parts ; but afterwards, when the *descent* was received into the Roman and Oriental creeds, the burial was there retained and instead of the *lower parts*, it was said that he descended *into hell* : which two considerations make it unreasonable to be imagined, that the *descent* in our creed should be applied to the burial of Christ's body ; for that having been already mentioned, it would be a tautology in so brief a compendium to repeat it again in other words ; and according to the propriety and idiom both of the Greek and Latin tongues, the most natural and easy interpretation thereof, and which best agrees with the order and method of the creed, is the same with what hath been already related ; which to prevent mistakes, I shall again repeat, viz. that by assenting to this clause, that Christ *descended into hell*, it was thereby intended for the reason aforesaid, viz. the asserting the reality of his human soul, to declare our belief that as upon the separation of his body and soul by death, his body was buried in the earth ; so his spotless and immaculate soul by a true and local motion, went unto the invisible and blessed habitation of holy and pious souls, where it remained in peace and happiness with the separated spirits of the faithful, in a triumphant and believing ex-

pectation of the time of his resurrection, which was the third day after; when his soul was delivered from the power of hell, and his body from the corruption of the grave, according to that text of the Psalmist on which this article is founded, cited by St. Peter in Acts ii. 27. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption."

C H A P. V.

The resurrection of Christ being a necessary fundamental of our religion, was always part of the creed, by which our belief is declared, that Christ rose from the dead, and returned to life again. The further consideration whereof, is referred to the article of the resurrection of the body. The reason for which our Lord's resurrection is said to be in and not after the third day. The ascension of our Saviour was introduced against an opinion of the Apelleians, viz. that at his ascension, his body was resolved into its first principles, and ascended not up on high, or into heaven. The nomination of which place, might probably have been designed in contradiction to a conceit of Her-mogenes, that his body went into the body of the sun. Sitting at the right hand of God

the father explained ; by which, we must not imagine Christ confined to that singular posture, but it signifies his advancement to the full exercise of his regal office : all things being subjected unto him by the father, who was infinitely able to do it, seeing he is almighty ; which word in the Greek, is different from that used in the beginning of the creed, and in this place denotes the irresistibleness and efficacy of God's power.— This clause is first found in the creed of Tertullian's, and was inserted, either as a continued proof with the ascension, that our Lord's body was not dissolved a little after his resurrection, or rather was designed against some heretics, who imagined the body of Christ to be in a stupid and unconcerned posture in heaven, and not to be sat down at his father's right hand, exercising all power and authority for the good of his church.— A brief explication of "from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."— Three interpretations of the "quick and the dead :" the last most natural, that by the quick are meant those who shall be alive at the coming of our Lord, and by the dead, those who shall then be actually void of life. This article was designed against the Marcionites and Gnostics : of whom, the one blasphemed the final judge, the other the judgment. Marcion, with his master Cerdon, held, that the true God, and his son Christ Jesus, were all mercy and love, and would never judge the world ; which opinion opened a flood-gate to all impiety ; in oppo-

sition whereunto, the creed declares, that he shall come to judge. The word judging explained, and supposeth a liberty and freedom of action in the person judged, and a rule by which he is judged; both which were denied by the Gnostics, as by the Valentinians, Basilidians, Carpocratians, and others, who all sprung from Simon Magus, and united in these two heresies, that man was fatally necessitated to all his actions, and that he should not be judged according to his works, but according to his spiritual seed, election, and the like: which tenets were attended with most abominable consequences; and therefore against them both, it was inserted in the creed, that Christ "shall come to judge the quick and the dead." Wherein, first, the liberty of man was acknowledged, which is farther evident from that the word *Autezousios*, or, that man hath a power over himself, was in several of the ancient creeds part of this article; the fathers could not imagine a just judgment, without supposing a freedom of the person judged. Secondly, it is farther declared by this clause, that men shall be judged according to their works; for which reason, whilst the heresy of the Gnostics raged, it was expressed with a suitable periphrasis to prevent any equivocating evasions. A brief repetition of the true intended sense of this article.

HITHERTO we have beheld our mediator and redeemer in the inglorious and mean estate of his humanity, throughout the

several steps of his humiliation, home to the last and most abasing of them, viz. the separation of his two essential parts by death, and the particular confining of them to their respective mansions and habitation ; his exaltation now follows ; and that sun of righteousness, which did set in redness and obscurity, now arises with light and splendor ; the earth could not detain his body, nor hell his soul, but each delivered up their prey ; for according to the next article in the creed, “ the third day he rose again from the dead ; ” that is, his body was delivered from the grave, and his soul from hell, and being re-united, constituted the same complete man and person that was before. The certainty of which resurrection, is absolutely necessary to the Christian religion, seeing without that it would be no better than a vain and frivolous imposture, or a mere cheat and delusion.

The great advantage and benefit that the gospel promises, is remission of sins ; the assurance whereof, depends upon the certainty of our Saviour’s resurrection ; for that declares the virtue of his sufferings, and the efficacy of his undertakings for us ; that God’s anger is now appeased, and he become propitious to mankind. The death of Christ is the ground of our absolution and pardon, but

his resurrection accomplished the collation of them; as [Rom. iv. 25.] “ he was delivered for our offences, so he was raised again for our justification ;” on which account St. Paul argues, that [1 Cor. xv. 17.] “ if Christ had not been risen, our faith is in vain ; we are yet in our sins.” The guilt thereof, or obligation to punishment is not yet removed, seeing our surety still remains under death, the effect and consequence of them.

Wherefore, seeing that on these and other accounts which might be mentioned, the resurrection of Christ is so necessary a part of the Christian faith, we may well conclude that it had a place in the creed from the beginning of Christianity : to the belief whereof, we may be farther induced from this consideration, that it was the peculiar end and design of the apostolical office, [Acts i. 22. xiii. 31.] “ to be witnesses of Christ’s resurrection :” And St. Paul looked upon it to be so necessary an article, that he doth as it were, make salvation and the whole Christian religion to depend on it alone ; [Rom. x. 6, 9.] “ the righteousness of faith,” saith he, “ saith thus, *id est*, it is the purport of the Christian institution, that thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy

heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

By this article it is declared, that we believe that Jesus Christ our Saviour, did truly and really arise from the dead, and return to life again: but now, forasmuch as this article is coincident with that of the resurrection of the body, and the particular resurrection of Christ the head, cannot well be distinctly considered from the resurrection of his members, but the one implies and proves the other: I shall therefore refer the farther consideration thereof to the article of *the resurrection of the body*, and only take notice in this place, of the time when Christ arose, which the creed declares to be the *third day*.

Wherein it is observable, that it is said to be *en te trite hemera*, in the third day, and not after the third day: For, as Augustin remarks, our Lord “was not three whole days in the grave,” but only the entire second day, and part of the first and last; the whole time of the disunion of his soul and body by death, being not above six and thirty hours or thereabouts; upon which account, the compilers of the creed did with good reason so cautiously express the time of his resurrection to be *in the third day*, and not after three days.

Isidore the Pelusiot, hath an whole epistle concerning this matter, to answer their silly enquiries, as he terms them, who would search into the cause of Christ's resurrection before he had remained three whole days in the grave ; where, after the allegation of several reasons therefore, he adds, " But if I would descend to the exact and accurate explanation of this question, I would say that Christ only said, that he would rise again the third day ; and so you have Friday, Saturday, which concludes with sun-set ; and after Saturday he arose, being in the grave part of the first and last day, and the whole of the middle day ; for in three days, he said he would rise again, and not after three days. Destroy this temple, saith he, and in three days I will raise it up again : and in like manner the prophet predicting it, saith, after two days will he revive us, and in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." From whence it appears, that it is not without reason, that the creed so exactly mentions the time of our Saviour's resurrection, seeing it was not after three days, but *in the third day* that he rose again.

After our Lord's resurrection, his *ascension into heaven* follows, which imports, that he left this world, and mounting through the air, as-

cended into the heaven of heavens, the throne
 of God, and the habitation of the most high ;
 on the truth whereof depends our future as-
 cension : for, if our Saviour be not ascended
 into heaven, it will be impossible for us ever
 to ascend thither. This is the foundation of
 our hope, the anchor of our soul, both sure
 and stedfast, that the forerunner, even Jesus, is
 entered for us within the veil, that he is gone
 to prepare a place for us, and will come again,
 and receive us unto himself ; that where he is,
 there we may be also. As for the occasion
 of its being introduced into the creed, it seems
 to have been taken from the Apelleians, a
 spawn of the Marcionites, so called from one
 Apelles a scholar of Marcion's, who, as Ter-
 tullian writes, " did not affirm with Marcion
 the body of Christ to be fantastical and ima-
 ginary, but that when he came down from
 heaven, he framed unto himself a side-
 real and an acreal flesh, which at his ascen-
 sion he restored to its primitive place ; and
 having thus dispersed every part of his body,
 his spirit alone was received into heaven :"
 or, as Epiphanius reports their heresy to be,
 " that our Lord in his coming down from hea-
 ven to earth, gathered unto himself a body
 from the four elements in which he was truly
 crucified, and after his resurrection shewed

the same flesh to his disciples; after which, having finished the dispensation of his incarnation, he restored unto every one of the elements that which he had received from them: and so dissolving his fleshly body, he ascended into heaven; from whence he came." Now, I say, it is very probable, that in opposition to this notion, the ascension was inserted in the symbol or rule of faith: Whence, Epiphanius in his confutation thereof, makes great use of this argument of the ascension; and elsewhere he thus explains this article itself, "he ascended into heaven, not divesting himself of his holy body, but uniting it unto a spiritual one;" not much different wherefrom, Irenæus thus repeats this article in one of his creeds, that we must believe "the fleshly reception of Jesus Christ our Lord, into heaven:" which was a most formal and avowed condemnation of the said Apelleians, who owned that his soul, but denied that his flesh ascended into heaven; "being offended," as St. Austin writes, "at the Christian faith, that an earthly body should be assumed into heaven; not knowing what is written, it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

Now the place unto which our Saviour ascended, is said to be heaven; by which, we

are not to understand the clouds, sometimes called the clouds of heaven, nor the starry heaven, but the third heaven, the heaven of heavens, the throne of God, and the more immediate habitation of the almighty: the nomination of which place, might probably have been designed in contradiction to a foolish conceit of an ancient heretic called Herinogenes, who according to the relation of Theodoret, affirmed "that the body of our Lord was placed in the sun;" wherein he was afterwards followed by the Seleuciani, and others, abusing to that end that text of the Psalmist, Psalm. xix. 4. "in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun;" reading it according to the mis-translation of the Septuagint, *en to helio etheto to skenoma autou* "in the sun hath he set his tabernacle;" from thence concluding, that our Saviour's body was after his resurrection, conveyed to the sphere of the sun, where it was to remain till his second coming: which silly imagination seems to have been confuted by this article, that *he ascended into heaven*, as also by what follows next to be considered, viz. that *he there sitteth at the right hand of God the father almighty*, till he shall come to judge both the quick and the dead. Which clause I shall first give the explication of, and then enquire into the time and occasion of its introduction into the creed,

and sitteth on the right hand of God the father almighty.

By his *sitting*, we are not to imagine him confined to that singular posture of body, in a distinction from all others, seeing Stephen saw him standing on the right hand of God ; but by it we are to understand his habitation, mansion, and continuance at the father's right hand, as Augustin upon this article writes, " that by sitting, we are to apprehend dwelling, as we say of any one, that he sate in that country three years, that is, that he dwelt there so long."

By the father's *right hand*, we are not to fancy, that he hath really any such parts as hands, or the like ; for being a spirit he is incorporeal, without any bodily members or organs ; but it is a metaphorical expression denoting a place of power, honor and happiness, signifying that our Lord is advanced in heaven, to a place of great dignity, bliss and authority ; " we believe," saith St. Austin, " that he sits at the right hand of God the father, not as though God had an human shape a right and a left side ; but by the right, we are to understand the highest happiness, where is righteousness, peace and joy ; as the goats are placed on the left, that is, in misery and torment."

But that which I suppose, was chiefly designed in the creed, by this phrase of *sitting at the right hand of God the father*, was this, viz. a declaration of the complete advancement of Christ our Lord, to his regal office, and of his plenary exercise of his kingly power; God [Ephes. i. 20, 21, 22.] “setting him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principalities, and powers, and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, putting all things under his feet, and giving him to be the head over all things unto the church.” In which sense it is interpreted by the author of the creeds, which are commonly ascribed to St. Austin, “that by the right hand is to be understood, that power which Christ as man received;” that is, the power of his mediatorial kingdom, exercised in the preservation of his church, and the subduing of his enemies; which authority and rule shall be so exercised till the general judgment-day, when his whole church shall be completely saved, and all his enemies shall be eternally vanquished and destroyed; after which time, [1. Cor. xv. 24.] “he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the father;” but, until that time, [Psalm cx. 1.] “till all his enemies are made his footstool,

he shall sit at the father's right hand ;" that is, he shall as mediator, exercise an absolute authority, and an unlimited dominion over all ; which sense I do the rather chuse to put upon these words, because the word *almighty* is farther added in this article ; wherein it is said, that he sitteth at the right hand of God the father *almighty* ; which word, though the same with that in the beginning of the creed, both in Latin and English, yet is different from it in the Greek. In the beginning of the creed, where it is said, I believe in God the father *almighty*, the Greek word is *Pantokrator*, which properly signifies God's supreme and universal dominion ; but in this article the Greek word is *Pantodunamos*, which in strictness and propriety of speech, denotes the efficacy and irresistibleness of his power and operation, that he hath all things at his command and beck, able to dispose of them without any controul or hinderance, as he himself pleaseth according to the counsel of his will : and so in this place this attribute seems to have been superadded to the person of the father, to confirm us in the belief of his son's *sitting at his right hand*, or of his universal disposal and government of all things, in the execution of his regal office as mediator, because the father, who hath advanced

him to that place of dignity and rule, is *almighty*, of infinite force and efficacy, whom no creature can resist, but all are infinite weakness and imbecility in comparison of him.

Now as for the time and occasion of the introduction and settling of this article in the creed, there is very little said concerning it in the primitive writers; it is in neither of the creeds of Irenæus; but is first found in those of Tertullian, and since his time used in most others.

According to the interpretation which some of the ancients give thereof, it seems to have been designed for no other end, than to be a continued proof of the same point with the precedent clause of the ascension, viz. that Christ did not lose or dissolve his human body after his resurrection, but that with the same body he not only ascended into heaven, but is also sate down at the right hand of his father, where he shall remain till the restitution of all things, when he shall come to judge the world; both the quick and the dead: according unto which, in the epistle of Damasus to Paulinus, amongst the several anathemas against the heretics of those times, there is this relation to our purpose; "if any one shall not say, that Christ in the same flesh which he assumed here, is sate down at the right

hand of the father, let him be accursed ;” where it is evident, that the explication that he gave of this article was that Christ since his ascension into heaven, continues still there with the very same body that he had on earth ; which exactly agrees with the explanation of the creed to the said Damasus, extant amongst the works of St. Jerome, but falsly attributed to him ; wherein this article is thus unfolded, “ he sitteth at the right hand of God the father, that nature of flesh remaining, in which he was born, and suffered, and also rose again.”

But, inasmuch as this point was asserted by the foregoing clause of the *ascension*, and this of our Lord’s *session at his father’s right hand*, is first found in the creeds of Tertullian, it is not improbable, but that it was chiefly designed against another sort of persons mentioned by the said father, who did indeed own the ascension of our Saviour’s human body into heaven, but “ affirmed it to remain there in a stupid and unconcerned manner, void of sense, and, without Christ, as a scabbard is when it is without a sword :” which doctrine is directly condemned by this article which assures us that our mediator liveth not in a regardless and unactive temper in heaven, but that since his ascension he is *sate down at his father’s right*

hand, having all power and authority committed into his hands, which he continually exerts for the weal of his church in the government of the whole world, and of every occurrence therein; which is not much different from the explication that Epiphanius gives of this article, which is, that Christ being ascended into heaven, “sate down at the right hand of God the father, and from thence sent forth preachers, apostles and evangelists into the whole world, as Peter, James, Mark, Luke, Barnabas, Stephen, Paul, and others; the last of whom he chose out by his own voice from heaven: so that he is not idle and unemployed in heaven, but is *sate down at the right hand of God the father almighty*; from whom he hath received all power and authority, which he constantly exercises for his own and his father’s glory, and the good of his church and people, and will still continue so to do to the end of the world, when *he shall come from heaven to judge both the quick and the dead*;

Which is the last particular that is attributed unto the son, and comes next in order to be considered; wherein I shall give first a brief explication thereof, and then shew the occasion and time of its being introduced into the creed.

Now as for the explication thereof, its sense is very plain and obvious, viz. that at the end of the world our Lord Jesus Christ shall come from heaven to judge according to their works, all mankind, both *the quick and the dead*; which latter words I shall a little more explain, because there was some difference in the notions of the ancients concerning them, which it may not be unnecessary to mention.

Isidore the Pelusiote, reckons up three explications of this phrase; the first whereof is, "that by the quick and the dead, may be understood the bodies and souls of men, that one shall not be separated from another, but as they have behaved themselves alike here, so they shall receive an equal reward hereafter:" according unto which interpretation Ruffinus also writes, "that by the quick may be understood souls, and by the dead bodies."

The second is "that by the quick and dead, are meant the good and bad;" which opinion is not condemned, but judged probable both by St. Austin and Gennadius Massiliensis; the latter of whom informs us that Diodorus bishop of Tarsus, who flourished about the year 380, attributed this sense unto it, "that by the quick and dead, are signified the Godly and ungodly."

But the third interpretation is the most natural and genuine, "that by the quick, are meant those who shall be alive at the coming of our Lord, and by the dead, those who shall be then void of life, and must then be raised to be brought to judgment;" which explication is followed by Augustin, Gennadius Massiliensis, and others.

So that taking in these three explications of *the quick and the dead*, the meaning of this article is no other than this, that all mankind in soul and body, both good and bad, the dead as well as those then living, shall appear at the last day before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, to receive from him according to what they respectively did in the flesh.

Now as for the occasion of the inserting this article in the creed, or the reason or cause of it, I apprehend it to have been two-fold; that it was designed to be an antidote against two sorts of most pestilent heretics, viz. the Marcionites and the Gnostics; the former of whom blasphemed the Judge, and the other subverted the Judgment: against whom it is most pertinently repeated in the creed, that Jesus Christ himself shall come to judge the world, that is, to dispense rewards and punishment to every man according to his works.

As for Marcion and his followers, they together with their master Cerdon, imagined two Gods, "the one an unknown, good, and merciful God, the other a just and severe God, the maker and creator of the world; the former, or the good God, they affirmed to be the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that both he and his son were nothing else but pity, grace and love; that the son's design in coming into the world, was only to save those from the severity of the maker of the world who should fly unto him; but as for others, though they should be the most flagitious and abominable sinners, yet he would never condemn or punish them: which monstrous and horrid tenet, opens a flood-gate to all licentiousness and impiety; for if God be only good, and not also just, who will ever obey his commandments, and especially such of them as are contrary to men's sensual inclinations and carnal interests? If there be no fear of a future punishment, the sensualists and voluptuous are without contradiction the wisest and most prudent men; and it would be a most unaccountable folly to mortify the flesh, to renounce the world, yea, and to deny interest, life, and all, to serve and obey that God, who is not at all displeased with any of our disobedient actions; and being not dis-

pleased, will never punish us, though we freely plunge ourselves in all sorts of debaucheries and impurities: on which account, in a just detestation of this impious doctrine Tertullian elegantly cries out, "hear this, all ye sinners, and ye who are not so yet, that ye may be so: such a kind God is found, who is neither offended nor angry, nor revengeth, who hath no fire burning in hell, nor gnashing of teeth in utter darkness; he is altogether good; he prohibits sin in words only; it is at your pleasure, whether you will obey him or no; for he doth not desire to be feared by you."

Wherefore, in contradiction to this destructive tenet of all religion and piety, the rule of faith declares, that God is not only good, but that he is also just; that he is a judge as well as a Saviour; that he and his son are justice and equity, as well as grace and mercy; that Christ Jesus did not only die and rise again for the good and weal of mankind, but that *he will also come to judge the quick and the dead*, to examine, into all men's carriages and behaviour's, and to reward them suitably thereunto; not only to give [Rom. ii. 8, 9.] "glory and honor, immortality and eternal life to the penitent and believing, but also to render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul of man that doth evil."

Now that this was the reason for which the name or person of the supreme or final judge is mentioned in the creed, seems very probable from the frequent use which the fathers make of this argument of Christ's coming to judge the world, to prove that God is just and righteous as well as kind and good, as may be seen in the writings of Tertullian, Irenæus, and others: And it appears to be more evident from the third book of Irenæus, which is chiefly levelled against the Marcionites; in the beginning whereof, after an account given of Polycarp's reception of Marcion at Smyrna, calling him the first-born of Satan, and of the care taken by the apostles and apostolic men, to preserve the faith of the gospel pure and entire from all manner of heresies whatsoever, he proceeds to repeat the Catholic creed, wherein this article is expressed with this circumlocution, "that he shall come to be the Saviour of those who are saved, and to be the judge of those who are judged, sending into eternal fire the corrupters of the truth, and the despisers of his father and of his coming;" which, on the same account is mentioned by Tertullian in terms not much unlike, viz. "that he shall come in brightness to receive the saints into the fruit of eternal life, and to adjudge the profane to everlasting fire;" in which two creeds, the actions of the judge

being so emphatically enumerated, after the confutation and recital of the heresy of the Marcionites, that he is not only the Saviour of the Godly, but also the condemner and punisher of the wicked, it is not unreasonable to conclude, that the person of the judge was inserted in the creed against the said heretics; by which in contradiction to them, it is declared, that God is not only good but also just; that as he will render a reward of happiness and bliss unto the righteous, so he will also [1 Thess. i. 7, 8.] "come from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them, who know not God, nor obey his gospel."

But, as there is remarkable in this article the person spoken of, viz. the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall come; so there is also observable, that which is predicated concerning him, which is, that he shall *judge both the quick and the dead*; by which is signified, that he shall at the last day, examine into all mens carriage and behaviour, and render them a just reward suitable to their deeds; that unto the holy he shall give life everlasting, but on the wicked he shall pour his wrath and vengeance, every one receiving according to his actions in this life, as they were good or evil; which supposeth that mankind, the subject of this judgment, was in this life a voluntary and

spontaneous creature, not forced by any superior agent, but freely determining himself to all his actions and operations : for judgment implieth a freedom and liberty in the person judged, as Justin Martyr writes, " that although the Christians believed that the holy prophets foretold future events, yet they did not thereby establish a fatal necessity, or a forcible predetermination to future actions, but altogether disowned and rejected it ; it being contrary to that fundamental truth taught them by the prophets, that there should be punishments and rewards rendered to every man according to the merits of his works ;" where he evidently declares, that in the opinion of that age, a righteous judgment, as our Lord's will be, did necessarily imply a liberty and freedom of every action that should be judged : for, as the said father continues farther to write in the same place, " if it be determined by fate, that this man shall be good, and the other wicked, then neither is the one to be commended, nor the other to be blamed : but, (saith he,) God hath not created man as trees and four footed beasts, who do nothing by choice and discretion ; neither would man deserve a reward or praise, if he were made good, and did not of himself choose the good ; neither if he were wicked, could he be justly

punished, except he voluntarily 'made himself so."

And as the word *judging* supposeth the liberty of the person judged, so it also implies a rule by which the judgment is to be made, which the scripture affirms, is to be according to every man's deeds, that [Matth. xxv. 46.] "they who have done wickedly, shall be adjudged unto everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto life eternal:" so that when this article is repeated, it is thereby declared, that man being a free and voluntary agent, acting without constraint or force, shall at the general judgment-day receive a sentence from Jesus Christ, either of bliss or woe, suitable to the works which he did here on earth, whether of piety or wickedness, obedience or disobedience. But now both these necessary truths, the liberty of man, and his being judged according to his works, were denied by the Valentinians, Basilidians, and others comprised under the general name of Gnostics: as I shall in the next place endeavor to shew, beginning first with the Valentinians, who were the chiefest sect amongst them; whose system concerning the nature and state of man is as follows: "they maintained that there were three kinds of men, spiritual, earthly and animal, whom they exemplified in Cain,

Abel, and Seth ; of which, the earthly sort would be necessarily reduced to corruption ; the animal should ascend to a place of rest if it did well, but should be reduced to the same fate with the earthly, if it did ill ; and the spiritual should certainly be saved : those who were earthly or material, though they lived never so good lives, yet should necessarily perish, because they were not capable to receive any breath of incorruptibility ;" that is, they were not capable to receive any of the spiritual seed of Achamoth, which they affirmed to be the alone cause of salvation, whereof I have already spoken under the article of *maker of heaven and earth*, unto which I refer the reader. " The animal, who were the middle sort between the earthly and the spiritual, should have their portion according to their inclinations and actions ; if they did ill, they should have the same condemnation with the material ; but if they did well, their souls should be hereafter received into the middle place, (as they called it) which they placed between the imaginary seventh heaven and their plenitude, and there remain in rest and quiet ; from whence they should never pass into the plenitude, because no animal being can be admitted there. This animal sort of men, they affirmed to be the orthodox Christians ; for whom, acts of piety and virtue were

absolutely necessary, that by them they might arrive unto the middle place, or the haven of their joy and happiness ; which animal kind was again thus subdivided by them ; some they said were evil, and others good by nature ; of which the one remained good, being capable to receive the spiritual seed, and the other continued evil, being incapable so to do : the nature of nature, (as Tertullian expresseth it,) being esteemed by them to be immutable and irreformable."

"The spiritual kind of men, were they themselves who had received the spiritual seed from Achamoth, by which alone they affirmed, they should be saved, and not by their good works and actions ; upon which account they exceeded in pride and arrogance, calling themselves perfect, and the seeds of election ; asserting, that they should be saved by virtue of their spiritual nature alone : on which account, they esteemed good works, unnecessary for them, maintaining, that neither good actions could profit them, nor evil actions injure them ; that as the material nature, though never so good in its actions, could not be saved, so their spiritual nature, though defiled with never so many enormities, should never see corruption ; for as a piece of gold, which is buried in the dirt and mire loses not

its beauty, but retains its nature that cannot be injured thereby, so in the like manner they affirmed, that they could not be harmed by any impious practices whatsoever, or lose their spiritual seed thereby; from whence the most perfect amongst them fearlessly perpetrated those sins of which the scriptures testify, that they which do them shall never enter into the kingdom of God, eating indifferently things offered to idols, not holding themselves to be defiled thereby, committing without any scruple or horror all manner of most execrable impieties, incests and villanies, most impudently avouching that they were not saved by good works, but by their spiritual seed; which spiritual seed being all perfected, their mother Achamoth shall leave the middle place wherein she hath hitherto lived, between the seventh heaven and the plenitude, wherein the Æons dwell, and enter into the plenitude itself, and be joined or copulated with the Saviour, who was made by all the Æons; after which the spiritual shall in an incomprehensible and invisible manner, enter within the plenitude also, to be given for spouses to the angels that are about the Saviour; and those of the animal who did well, shall go into the middle space: which things being once transacted, a fire which now lies hid in the world, shall

kindle and break out, and with itself consume all that is material, so that it shall be no more."

But as the Valentinians, so the Basilidians also, who were another sect of the Gnostics, embraced in a great measure the very same opinions, introducing "a precedent natural necessity to all mens actions, whether of faith or unbelief," affirming, that "faith was a natural gift, or, the prerogative of nature;" to which they were forcibly predetermined or premove, and should be thereby saved, although their lives were never so irregular and debauched; upon which account, it is no wonder that in a conformity to these principles, they openly indulged themselves in all manner of wickedness, "eating without any fear or scruple things offered to idols, and freely committing all other acts of villany and uncleanness, esteeming all actions to be indifferent;" that no good work could advantage, or bad work prejudice them, seeing they "were by nature believers and elected, and had a liberty to be wicked by reason of their perfection; and although they did sin, yet they should necessarily be saved by virtue of their natural election."

Not much unlike whereto were the horrid tenets of the Carpocratians, another subdivi-

sion of the Gnostics, who blasphemously imagined "only faith and charity to be necessary to salvation; that all other things were indifferent; that according to the opinion of men, some things were called good, and others bad, when in reality there is by nature nothing evil;" from whence, together with the former heretics, they plunged themselves in all licentiousness and debauchery; it being related concerning them by Clemens Alexandrinus, that after their natural inclinations to lust, were excited through the delicacy and abundance of meats at their suppers or love feasts, they extinguished their lights, and both men and women promiscuously joined and perpetrated the most filthy and obscenest villainies.

But, what need I mention any more of the particular sects of these monstrous Gnostics, seeing, though each division was signalized by some peculiar notion, yet they generally combined in the forementioned heresies and abominations, taking the first occasion thereof from the grand patriarch and master Simon Magus, who affirmed, "that God so created the nature of man, as that by its proper motion and necessary impulse, it neither could, nor would do any thing else but sin; that those who believed in him, and in his whore *Selene*,

might live as they list, seeing salvation was to be obtained according to his grace, and not according to his good works."

So that the whole swarm of Gnostics, or at least the greatest part of them, united in these two dangerous tenets, that man was fatally necessitated and predetermined to all his actions whether good or bad, and that he should not be judged at the last day according to his works, but be disposed of according to his spiritual seed, election, or solitary faith, which was naturally conferred upon him, and was not attainable by any endeavor or industry of his own. Now, what more monstrous and abominable can be expressed or imagined? By the first of these opinions, God is made the author of sin, represented as an unkind, cruel, and an unjust being, punishing and tormenting his creatures for that nature which he irresistibly forced on them; the nerves and sinews of all human industry and diligence are cut and broken, the nature of rewards and punishments is entirely taken away, and many other blasphemies are the natural consequences of so wild an opinion. By the second, the necessity of an holy life is taken away, licentiousness and impiety are introduced, all manner of wickedness is patronized and encouraged.

Wherefore, in contradiction to these notions, that all true Christians might be confirmed and settled in contrary principles thereunto, the fathers of the primitive church inserted in the rule of faith, that Christ *shall come to judge both the quick and the dead*; thereby declaring the liberty of man in all his actions, and that the final disposal of every man shall be according to the works which he hath done in the flesh.

Now that a declaration of the freedom of men's actions was designed hereby, will be most evident from this consideration, viz. that in some of the ancient creeds the word *autezousios*, or that *man hath a power over himself*, was part of this article; as in a creed of Origen's; one of the fundamental truths assented to is, "that we being *autezousioi* or, having the command over ourselves, shall be punished for what we do ill, and be rewarded for what we do well:" and in another of his, translated by Ruffinus, it is declared to be the ecclesiastical doctrine received from the apostles, "that every soul is rational, of a free-will and determination; from whence it follows, that we are not subject to necessity, and compelled against our will do either good or evil:" and in his dialogues, where Eutropius, the moderator of the dispute between an or-

thodox Christian and his several heretical opponents, Gnostics, and others, sums up the Christian faith; he repeats this as one article thereof, "that God shall judge all men justly according to the freedom of their wills, or, the power that they have over themselves." In all which creeds, the inserting of the word *autezousios* in this article, or that "man hath a command over himself, doth most clearly convince us, that the forementioned heresy of the Gnostics, was designedly levelled at, and condemned thereby.

And, even in those other creeds, wherein that word was not expressed, the same sense was always supposed and couched under the word *judge*; for the fathers apprehend it an impossible thing, that there should be a true judgment where a man was irresistibly necessitated to all his actions: for, as Clemens Alexandrinus writes against the Basilidians, "if faith be the prerogative of nature, then there can be no just retribution, neither to him that believeth not, because it is not his fault neither to him that believeth, because he is not the cause thereof; and the property and difference of faith and unbelief being under a precedent natural necessity from the almighty, cannot be either commended or blamed by all due considerers:" wherefore they did with

good reason apprehend, that a profession of our Saviour's coming *to judge the world*, was a sufficient declaration of the freedom of man, who is to be the person judged; as in the forementioned passage of Justin Martyr the said father writes, "that the Christians did not believe a fatal necessity, or a forcible pre-determination to their future actions, but altogether disowned and rejected it, because it was contrary to that fundamental truth taught them by the prophets, that there should be punishments and rewards rendered to every man according to the merits of his works:" where he concludes, that the very notion of judgment did necessarily suppose the freedom and liberty of those actions for which the person shall be judged. Upon which account, St. Austin, the great asserter of the grace of God, and of the necessity of its concurrence in the conversion of a sinner, doth from this argument contend for the liberty of man, as well as from others he pleads for the efficacy of God's grace: an instance whereof is in a letter of his to one Valentinus, the head probably of a monastery, wherein some over-zealous and imprudent opposers of Pelagius, had advanced the power of divine grace, to that height, as to take away all freedom from man, which he condemns as dangerous and errone-

ous; and directs to the middle way as the safest, wherein the grace of God is so asserted, as that the liberty of man is not denied; and the liberty of man is so maintained, as that the grace of God is not diminished: "there are come, (saith he) unto us from your congregation, two young men, Cresconius and Felix, who report, that your monastery is divided; that some so preach up grace, as to deny man to have a free-will; and which is worse, that at the day of judgment, God will not render to every man according to his works; but that others disagreeing from them, confess that our free-will is helped by the grace of God, to think and do those things which are right, that when the Lord shall come to render unto every man according to his works, he may find our works good which God hath prepared, that we may walk in them; those who think so, think well: wherefore, as the apostle did the Corinthians, so I beseech you, brethren, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all say the same thing, and that there be not schisms amongst you, for our Lord Jesus Christ came not first to judge the world, but that the world through him might be saved; but hereafter he shall judge the world, when he shall come, as the whole church professes in the creed, to judge both the quick and the dead. If therefore,

there be not God's grace how can he save the world? And, if there be not free-will, how can he judge the world?" Where he appeals, as it were to the common sense of all mankind, that there could not be a proper and righteous judgment, as to be sure our Lord's will be, except the party adjudged were free and voluntary in all his actions. From all which, it doth evidently appear, that by this article, the compilers of the creed designed to obviate that part of the heresy of the Gnostics, which introduced a fatal necessity, and denied the liberty of man.

But, as this part of the Gnostics heresy which regarded the liberty of man, so also that other part which denied the future judgment to be according to mens works, was warded against by this article, that *Christ shall come to judge both the quick and the dead*. These heretics, as it hath been already related, affirmed, that men should not be tried and rewarded at the last day, according to their works and actions ; that it was no odds whether they lived virtuously or wickedly, but that according to their spiritual seed, election, predetermination, and the like, they should be either condemned or absolved ; wherefore, as an antidote to prevent the infection of so pernicious a tenet, it was inserted in the

creed, That *Christ* shall come to *judge* the world, that is, to render unto all men, rewards suitable to their deeds ; which is most undeniably evident from that, whilst the heresy of the Gnostics raged and infested the church ; the rulers thereof, to prevent any equivocal evasions, expressed this article with such a periphrasis and circumlocution, as the Gnostics could never assent to without a direct and formal renunciation of their horrid notions, and by which the whole world might apparently see, that their heresy was intentionally aimed at thereby ; examples of which are in the two creeds of Irenæus, the great scourge and confuter of those heretics. In the first whereof, which is immediately subjoined to his large account of that heresy, as a preservative there-against ; this article is thus expressed, That he shall come from heaven “to render a righteous judgment unto all ; that he shall send into everlasting fire evil spirits, and the angels which are fallen and apostatized, and all impious, unrighteous, ungodly and blasphemous men ; but that on the righteous holy, and obedient observers of his commandments, he shall confer life, immortality and everlasting glory ;” and in his second, that “he shall come in glory to be the Saviour of those who are saved, and the judge of those who are judged, sending into everlasting fire

the corrupters of his truth, and the despisers of his father and coming." Not much unlike to which we have another instance in a creed of Tertullian's wherein this article is thus worded, "that Christ shall come in splendor to receive the saints into the fruit of eternal life, and the heavenly promises, and to adjudge the profane to everlasting fire." But afterwards when the heresy of the Gnostics decreased, and their numbers lessened, or were altogether extinct, it is probable, that the governors of the church not willing to enlarge their short confession of faith beyond what was absolutely necessary, omitted this circumlocution, and contented themselves with a bare declaration, that *Christ* shall come to *judge* the world, seeing unto all sensible and unprejudiced persons, that it is a sufficient and manifest acknowledgement, that every man shall at that day be suitably rewarded according to his actions here.

To conclude therefore with this article; from what hath been written, it doth appear, that by the repetition thereof, it was designed that we should yield our assent to this proposition, that Jesus Christ the son of the true and only God, shall at the end of the world descend from heaven, to render a righteous

judgment unto all mankind, either of absolution or condemnation, according to their works and actions, which in this life they freely and voluntarily acted and committed.

C H A P. VI.

I believe in the Holy Ghost. *Why the word believe is again repeated. This article was always part of the creed. Why so little is said of the Holy Ghost, when so much is said of the Father and of the Son. His divinity intended by the creed's requiring us to believe in him; whereas, we are only simply required to believe the ensuing articles; as in particular the holy Catholic church, which is next of all considered. In the Greek, wherein they are followed by the modern French and Dutch, the word believe is again repeated before the article of the church; which, for different ends, was variously placed in the primitive creeds. Its usual order after the Holy Ghost. This article first mentioned by Tertullian. The most ancient creeds read only the holy church. The term Catholic being added by the Greeks to be an explication or determination thereof. By the church, is to be understood the universal one, which is affirmed to be one, holy and Catholic. That the unity of the church was here intended, appears from that the*

Greek creeds read in one holy Catholic church. The church universal is to be considered as one, either as to faith or charity; in which sense it was for several reasons which are mentioned inserted in the creed in opposition to heretics and scismatics. The church termed holy from the purity and holiness of her doctrine, which is assented to thereby. The affection Catholic, which signifies universal, not always in the creed; first introduced by the Greeks, to prevent too narrow and limited conceptions of the church. A brief repetition of what is assented to, when we repeat this article, the holy Catholic church. Whereunto is added as an appendix, the communion of saints; which was introduced about St. Austin's time, in opposition to the Donatists. By saints, are to be understood particular churches and the members thereof. For what reason they were called saints. By communion, is signified the mutual society and fellowship of particular church and their members. Various methods used by the ancients to maintain their communion. The Donatists refused communion with other churches; and for that schism, were justly condemned and rejected by them. In opposition unto whom, this article may be considered either as a mark to know a true particular church by, that she is one that is acknowledged so to be by other churches, or rather as the quality, property and practice of such an one to hold communion with other particular churches: in which sense it is also added as

an explanation of the holy Catholic church, and was intended to declare, that there ought to be a due communion and fellowship between the particular churches and members of the Catholic and universal one.

THE faith of an orthodox Christian, respecting the *father* and the *son*, having been already declared, "that our belief," as Augustin writes, "might be perfected concerning God; the creed proceeds to add, that we must also believe in the Holy Ghost:" where the word *believe* is again repeated to relieve our memories, after that so many particulars concerning the son had intervened.

This article hath been always part of the creed, and is coeval with Christianity and the administration of baptism, as appears from the very form of baptism, the ground and foundation of the creed, which is not only to be solemnized in the *name of the father and of the son*, but also of the *Holy Ghost*, where the *Holy Ghost* is joined with the *father* and the *son*: from whence Didymus thus argues, "who will not from hence conclude the equality of the sacred trinity, seeing there is but one faith in the father, son, and Holy Ghost? and baptism is given in the names of all three. I do not think that any one will be so foolish or mad, as to imagine that baptism

to be perfect, which is given in the name of the father and of the son, without the addition of the Holy Ghost." Consonant unto which, is that observation of St. Jerom, that those persons mentioned in the nineteenth of the "Acts, who were baptized with John's baptism, and believed in God the father and Christ Jesus, because they knew not the Holy Ghost, were again baptized, yea then received the true baptism; for, without the Holy Ghost, the mystery of the trinity is imperfect."

It may perhaps seem strange to some, that when there is so much declared in the creed relating to the father and the son, so little should be said concerning the Holy Ghost. But, for this there is a sufficient and manifest reason, which is, that there was not so good a controversy in the primitive church concerning the divinity and person of the Holy Ghost; for, though the Gnostics and some others blasphemed him, yet their assaults were more furious and violent against the father and the son, which obliged the church to use her greatest care for the preservation of that part, which was most exposed and attacked.

This observation was made long ago against the Macedonians, or Pneumatomachists, the

first heretics, who owning the divinity of the son, directly attacked that of the Holy Ghost alone; of whom Epiphanius writes, "that they boasted of their entire adherence to the Nicene creed," which saith the same with the apostles creed, concerning the Holy Ghost, "affirming, that his divinity was not therein asserted;" unto which the said father replies, "that whatsoever they might imagine, that creed did not condemn their heresy; for, although there was no great mention made of the Holy Ghost therein, because there was no controversy then about him; and that Synod principally insisted upon the articles of faith relating to the deity of the son, (which at that time were impugned and denied by Arius and his followers;) yet nevertheless, there was sufficient said of him to declare him to be God, in that as we are directed by that creed, not only simply to believe the father and the son, but *in* the father and *in* the son, terminating our faith upon them; so also, we are obliged in the like manner to believe *in* the Holy Ghost."

Which criticism and distinction between *believing* and *believing in*, is not to be despised, seeing the primitive writers lay great stress thereon; and do from thence conclude and prove the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and in-

firmate to us, that the framers of the symbol did on this account omit to prefix the preposition *in*, before the other articles which immediately succeed, as it is observed by Ruffinus, that “it is not said in the holy church, nor in the remission of sins, nor in the resurrection of the body ; for, if the preposition *in* had been added, it would have had the same force with what went before. But now in those words, where our faith in the Deity is declared, it is said to be in God the father, and in his son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost ; but, where the creed speaks of creatures and mysteries, the preposition *in* is not added ; as we do not say *in* the holy church, but that we believe the holy church, not as *in* God, but as a church congregated by God ; and we do not say *in* the forgiveness of sins, nor *in* the resurrection of the body, but *the* forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection of the body ; by this preposition therefore, the creator is distinguished from the creatures, and divine things separated from humane.” So that the not prefixing the preposition *in* before *the holy Catholic church*, and the other articles which follow, directs us, according to the said observation of Ruffinus, to believe them after another manner than the precedent articles before whom that syllable is prefixed ; that on the former we are to believe as God, whilst

we are only simply to believe the latter as mysteries revealed by God ; or as the author of a sermon, who passeth under the name of St. Austin, expresseth it, with particular relation to the article of *the holy Catholic church* ; which I now come in the next place to consider, that the creed obligeth us "to believe the church, but not in the church ; for the church is not God, but the house of God." By all which, it appears, that the ancients observed a great difference in the manner of their believing the several articles of the creed, laying a great stress upon this little preposition *in* ; and which is yet farther observable, the Greeks contented not themselves with the bare suppression thereof before *the holy Catholic church*, but to make the distinction more evident and remarkable, inserted also another *I believe* between that and the precedent article of *the Holy Ghost* : from whence it comes to pass, that the modern Greek creeds thus run ; wherein they are exactly followed by the present French and Nether Dutch, *Pisteuo eis pneuma, hagion pisteuo tene hagian ekklesian, katholiken.* *I believe in the Holy Ghost, I believe the holy Catholic church.*

But, to insist no longer on these criticisms, and to come to the article of *the holy Catholic church* ; there is this thing in the first place

to be remarked concerning it, that the ancient creeds vary in the order and place thereof. In several of them it is the very last article of all; as in a creed of Cyprian's, wherein we profess to believe "the remission of sins, and life everlasting through the holy church." The reason whereof is alledged by one who falsly passeth under the name of St. Austin, to be, "because if any one be found out of the church, he is not to be reckoned in the number of sons; for he shall not have God for his father, who will not have the church for his mother;" or, as it may be gathered from St. Cyprian, the design thereof was, to signify that "remission of sins and life everlasting, could not be obtained but in and through the holy Catholic church."

But in the generality of creeds, this article possesseth the same place that it doth in ours, immediately following our faith in the Holy Ghost; the reason whereof is thus given by Tertullian, in whom the clear mention of this article is first found, "that after the pledging of our faith and hope in the trinity, the mention of the church is necessarily added, because where those three, the father, the son and the Holy Ghost are, there is the church, which is the body of them." Not much different wherefrom, St. Austin writes, that "the right

order of faith required, that the Church should be subjoined to the trinity, as an house to his occupier, a temple to its God, and a city to its builder.

But, besides the different placing of this article in the primitive creed, there is this to be remarked concerning the words thereof, that the more ancient symbols had only the holy church, as is to be seen in Cyprian and several others : the word Catholic being afterwards added by the Greeks, as I shall hereafter shew, by way of explication or determination ; from whom it was received by the Latins, and by them inserted in their creed, wherein we now read *the holy Catholic church*. Into the meaning and intent whereof, I now proceed to enquire ; in which, the sense of the word *church* is first to be considered, and the effections thereof, which are in number three, unity, sanctity and universality. As for the church, which we are obliged to believe, though it be capable of various significations, yet the affection of universality being joined with it, makes it evident, that it must be here necessarily understood of the visible Catholic, universal church, which comprehends within its bounds all men and women, who throughout the whole world make a visible profession of the Christian religion, and own the doctrine delivered

by our Saviour and his apostles ; who, though necessarily divided into many separate congregations and particular churches, yet compose but that one general church, which is here affirmed by the creed to be one, holy and Catholic.

Now that the unity of the church is herein contained, appears not only from that this article is in the singular number, and from that the fathers put this constant interpretation upon it ; but also from that in some creeds, to render it the more obvious and indisputable, the word *one* is added thereto, as in the Nicene, or rather Constantinopolitan creed, “ I believe *one* holy Catholic and Apostolic church :” and in the exposition thereof, by Alexander bishop of Alexandria, he expresses it by “ the one and only Catholic and Apostolic church.”

Now, though in several respects the universal church may be said to be *one*, yet, that it may not go beyond the bounds of my designed task, I shall only take notice of what was principally intended by the inserters of it in the creed, which was, that the church is one as to her faith and doctrine ; that though she be enlarged through the face of the whole earth, yet all her members universally assent to the same necessary truths of the gospel,

and that she is one as to her love and charity ; there being an harmonious agreement and union between particular churches which complete and perfect the universal one.

That the unity of the churches faith was hereby designed, will more evidently appear, when I shall come to consider the occasion of its being placed in the creed ; for the present, I shall only cite a pregnant passage in Irenæus very pertinent to this purpose, which is, that immediately after his repetition of the creed, he writes, “ that the church altho’ dispersed through the whole world, yet, as if she dwelt in one and the same house, did diligently preserve this faith, believing it, as if she had but one soul, and one heart, and uniformly preaching and teaching it, as if she had but one mouth ; for, although there be different dialects in the world, yet the force of tradition is one and the same ; for neither do the churches in Germany, Spain, France, the East, Egypt, Libya, or the middle of the world, believe otherwise ; but as the sun is one and the same in the whole world, so the preaching of the truth shines every where, and enlightens all men who are willing to come unto the knowledge thereof.”

But the unity of the church universal, besides the uniformity of her faith, included al-

so the love and concord, union and communion, which was and ought to be between her particular members and churches, which is now partly contained in the following clause of the *communion of saints*, and is partly to be considered under this article, to render the interpretation thereof complete and entire. In reference whereunto, it directs us to this observation, that although the universal Catholic church be composed of different and almost innumerable members and churches, yet that she is but one body; and those particular parts are, or ought to be united amongst themselves by love and charity, without factions and schisms, and so agree as to the execution of their ecclesiastical power and government, that whatsoever is justly determined in one church according to the common laws received by them, is not thwarted and contradicted by another; and, if any schismatical and factious spirits rent and divide one church, they are not favored or countenanced, but disallowed and condemned by others; all churches harmoniously concurring in this bond of love and charity, diligently avoiding every thing that might break this kind of unity of the church universal.

Now that which gave occasion unto the fathers to introduce the unity of the church thus

expounded into the rule of faith, where the heresies and schisms wherewith they were pestered and assaulted; designing to oblige hereby all orthodox Christians at their baptism, to declare, that they would firmly adhere to the one and undivided church of Christ which preserved the faith of the gospel pure from heresies, and the union thereof free from schisms and divisions.

Now that the unity of the churches faith, and an adhesion thereunto, was for the fore-mentioned reason designed hereby, appears from the frequent references which the fathers in their disputes against heretics, make unto the faith and doctrine of the church, and especially of those parts of her who were planted and confirmed by the apostles, challenging the heretics to be determined by their arbitrement and exhorting the faithful to follow their prescriptions and directions : which method is frequently used by Tertullian (in whose works is the first mention of this clause as an article of the creed,) as in his book of prescriptions against heretics, where he several times refers his readers to the faith received in the church, and admonishes them to "reject as lies, whatsoever doctrines were contrary to the truth of the churches;" as also by Irenæus who from time to time "challenges

the heretics to stand to that tradition, which from the apostles, by the succession of presbyters, was preserved in the church; in which church God placed apostles, prophets, doctors, and the rest of the spirit's operation, whereof they are not partakers who do not run unto the church, but deprive themselves of life by their evil faith and wicked works; for where the church is, there is the spirit; and where the spirit of God is, there is the church, and all grace :” So that by assenting to the unity of the church in this sense, it was thereby intended to declare, that forsaking all heretics & renouncing communion either with them or their heresies, we will adhere and firmly stick to the faith and doctrine received in the apostolical and universal church.

But, as the unity of the church, as including its faith, was intended against heretics, the corrupters thereof; so also, as comprehending its love and charity, it was designed against schismatics, who were subverters thereof, and the introducers of all disunion, confusion and disorder; which will be manifest from this consideration, that all the legal acts of a particular church were esteemed and reckoned to be the acts of the universal one, and were not contradicted, but ratified and approved by other particular churches; and if any did un-

justly separate from, or cause disorder and confusion in a particular church, they were condemned as dividers from, and disturbers of the whole Catholic universal church : a particular church being part of the universal, every disorder and breach therein had a general and universal influence ; as the pain and anguish of one member affects and disturbs the whole body, so the division of one particular church was reputed to break the unity of the universal and Catholic one : from whence the schism of Novatian, which at first respected only the church of Rome, is frequently represented by Cyprian, who was his cotemporary, to be a rent and separation from the Catholic church ; as when several of the Roman confessors had engaged with him in that schismatical conspiracy, he informs their legal bishop Cornelius, that he had written unto them an extraordinary letter “ to return to their mother, that is, to the Catholic church ;” in which letter, he most sensibly bewails their grievous sin in consenting to the election of a schismatical bishop, which was not only against the law of the gospel, but also against “ the unity of the Catholic institution ;” and as pathetically intreats them, “ not to separate themselves from the flock of Christ, his peace and concord, but to return to the church their mother ;” and when it pleased God to incline

their hearts to come back to their former station; he terms it "a returning to the Catholic church:" so that although their schism had only an immediate reference to their own particular church, yet by reason of their mutual intercourse between each other, and its subversion of the common order observed by them, it was esteemed to be a contradiction to the unity, and a separation from the communion of the whole Catholic church; for which reason, those who schismatically disturbed the peace and union of those churches to which they appertained, were never maintained and encouraged by other churches, or received to communion by them; an instance whereof we have in the legates of Novatian, author of a schism in the church of Rome, with whom neither Cyprian bishop of Carthage, nor Antonius another African bishop, would communicate, lest thereby they should impair the unity of the universal church, which though "divided into many members, yet was but one church;" and which is yet farther observable, that the unity and order of the church in this respect, might be preserved entire and inviolable, whosoever was excommunicated in one church, was not received into communion by another, till he had given satisfaction unto that church by which he was censured.

An eminent example whereof, is to be seen in the heretic Marcion, who being ejected from the church by his own father, the bishop of Sinope in Pontus, applied himself to the church of Rome to be admitted to communion there, who rejected him with this answer, "that they could not do it without the permission of his father, because the faith is one, and the concord one ; and we cannot contradict our reverend fellow-minister, but your father." From all which, it evidently enough appears, that as by assenting to the unity of the church, an aversion to heresies and heretics was thereby intended to be declared ; so by the same, it was likewise designed to profess an adherence to the Catholic communion, in contradiction to schisms and schismatics ; which is not much different from what St. Austin writes on this article, " we believe (saith he) " the holy church, to wit, the Catholic one ; for heretics and schismatics, call their congregations churches ; but heretics, by false opinions concerning God, violate the faith ; and schismatics, by unjust separations, depart from brotherly love, although they believe what we believe : wherefore, a heretic doth not belong to the Catholic church, because she loves God ; nor a schismatic, because she loves her neighbor."

But as the church is one, so the creed affirms it also to be holy ; for which appellation, many reasons might be given ; which, to prevent a digression from my designed task, I shall omit to mention, and only take notice of that which probably the framers of the creed intended by it, which is not much different from the intent of the precedent affection of the church, viz. its unity ; for as by that is declared a renunciation of the perfidious tenets and practices of heretics and schismatics, so by this is acknowledged the truth and regularity of the doctrines and actions of the Catholic church ; that whatsoever she proposeth to our faith (still with this supposition, that it is according to the holy scriptures) is certain, pure, and unquestionable ; which interpretation I gather from the exposition of Ruffinus, who writes on this article, that “the church, in which there is one faith, and one baptism, in which there is believed one God the father, one Lord Jesus Christ his son, and one Holy Ghost, is the holy church without spot or wrinkle ; for, many others have gathered churches, as Marcion, Valentinus, Ebion, Manichæus, Arius, and all other heretics, but these churches were not without the spot or wrinkle of perfidiousness ; wherefore the prophet said of them, I have hated the church of evil doers, and will not sit with the wicked.

But of this church which keeps the faith of Christ entire, hear what the Holy Ghost saith in the song of songs, *My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother* ; let him therefore who hath received this faith in the church, not turn aside to the council of vanity, neither let him go in the way of evil doers.” After which, the said father enumerates several heretics, as Marcion, Ebion, and others, who turned aside to the council of vanity, and embraced impious and blasphemous opinions ; “ from whom, saith he, let the believer turn aside and hold the holy faith of the church, which is, I believe in God the father almighty, &c.” From whence it appears that the church is metonymically called *holy*, from the holiness and purity of her faith ; in which sense, Cyprian beseeches God the father almighty, and his son Jesus Christ our Lord, that “ the unity and the sanctity of the church might not be corrupted by the obstinacy of perfidiousness, and heretical pravity.” So that by affirming the church to be holy, the faith and doctrine thereof is hereby declared to be pure and undefiled.

The third affection of the church yet remaining to be considered, is *Catholic* ; which, as it hath been already remarked, was not originally in this article, but was introduced

by the Greeks as an explication or determination thereof ; the first creed wherrin it is found, being that of Alexander, bishop of Alexandria ; after which, it is in both of the creeds of Epiphanius, repeated in his book, entitled, *Sermo Ancoratus*, and of several other Greeks, from whom it was received by the Latins ; signifying the same with universal, determining the one and holy church spoken of in this article, to be that which is diffused throughout the whole world, from one end of the earth unto the other ; that “ it was not like the churches of heretics, confined within certain places and provinces, but enlarged by the splendor of one faith, from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof.” Whereby provision was made against too narrow and limited conceptions of the church ; it being too natural even to good men, and that especially when transported with heat and zeal, to make the entrance into the church narrower than ever the founder thereof intended it. I would not willingly animadvert so far on any of the primitive fathers, who were men famous in their generations, the ornament and splendor of their respective ages, as to say, that some of them, in favor to their own particular churches, did sometimes reduce the unity and sanctity of the church to

so narrow a compass as seems to be subverting the charity and moderation of a Christian, espousing such straitened notions as excluded many from the number of the church militant here, who might be reasonably presumed should be members of the church triumphant hereafter; but this I will venture to say, that to prevent too rigid straitened conceptions of the church, and the mistaking of any particular part thereof for the whole, it is highly probable, that the term *Catholic* was added in the creed as an explication of the two former affections of the church, to inform and settle the true believer's judgment in free and moderate principles, that the one and holy church, is not to be confined to any particular place or corner, but is diffused throughout the face of the whole earth; that from one end of the world unto another, all those who make a profession of Jesus Christ, and retain Christian love and charity, however disagreeing from each other in lesser and inferior points, are the constituent parts and members of this one holy church.

Wherefore, to conclude this article "of the holy Catholic church;" by the repetition thereof, it was intended to declare our firm persuasion, that Jesus Christ hath one visible body or church here on earth, comprehend-

ing all the professors of his name throughout the whole world, who retain the purity of the faith, and the unity of the spirit, in the bond of love ; unto which church, as pure and peacable, in opposition to all real heretics and schismatics, we will by the grace of God, stick and adhere.

To the article of the *holy Catholic church*, there is added as its appendix, *the communion of saints* ; which is not found in any creed before St. Austin's time, nor in any, as I do think, of his genuine and undoubted writings, seeing in his Enchiridion to Laurentius, he assures us, that "in the order of the confession of faith, the forgiveness of sins was placed after the commemoration of the holy church," though it be very likely, that about that time, or not long after, this clause was introduced, not only because it is first found in a "creed recited in a sermon," commonly attributed unto him, but also because at that time, a probable occasion presented itself for which it should be introduced, viz. the schism of the Donatists ; as I shall immediately shew, after that I shall have first explained the two terms of this clause, *communion* and *saints*.

And first of all, the term *saints* is not in this place to be strictly confined to those who are

really and internally holy, but is to be understood of all the several members of particular churches professing Christianity ; as St. Paul directs his epistles to the saints which were at Ephesus, Philippi and Colosse, that is, as Dr. Hammond expounds it, to the societies of Christians belonging to those places, or constituting those churches ; the word saint or holy being attributed to the whole, because a great part of them had without doubt, received a principle of true and inward sanctity ; or, they might be rather called holy upon the account of their separating themselves from the heathenish and idolatrous world, to the worship of the true God, through Jesus Christ ; for it is well known, that the primary notion of the word holy signifies no other, than the separation of a thing or person from a common and profane, to a peculiar and religious use ; for which reason, the children of Israel, though often the greatest part of them were vicious and corrupt, are frequently called in the old testament an holy people or nation, because God had chosen them out from the rest of the world, and set them apart for his peculiar people. In which manner also, the creed here styles the members of particular churches saints or holy, because by their profession and baptism, which is a sign and seal of purification, and is metonymically called

[Acts xxii. 16.] a washing away of sins, they are separated from the rest of the world, and devoted to the pure and holy service of the true God, through Jesus Christ.

Now the term *saints* being thus explained, it will not be difficult to apprehend the meaning of the other term *communion*; which naturally appears to be this, that there is and ought to be a mutual intercourse and society, fellowship and communion, in all usual and regular ways, between the several respective churches and congregations of Christians and believers, whereby they declare unto the whole world, that although both necessity and conveniency oblige them to assemble in distinct places, and compose different societies, that yet nevertheless, they are all members of one and the same body, of which Christ Jesus is the head; that they are all guided by the same spirit, communicate in the same institutions, and governed by the same general rules; so that whatsoever is regularly performed and determined in one congregation, is assented to by all others; and whosoever is received to communion in one church, is freely admitted in any other.

Various were the methods used by the ancients, to maintain an inviolable communion and correspondency between themselves, and

to preserve the union of their particular churches whole and entire ; amongst which the communicatory letters which the bishop elect of any church sent to other bishops and they returned to him, were not the least, as Cornelius advised Cyprian bishop of Carthage, of his promotion to the see of Rome ; who, on the contrary, returned him a communicatory letter, acknowledging him to be bishop of that part of the universal church, and promising to hold communion with him as a brother and fellow member ; which communicatory letters, Antonius an African bishop, refused to send to Novatian, a schismatical pretender to the bishopric of Rome ; who, according to the usual custom, advised by letter the canonical bishops of several churches, that he was advanced unto the Episcopal throne ; though all or most of them would not send back their communicatory letters unto him, lest thereby they should dissolve the communion and fellowship, which ought to be carefully preserved between all the particular members and congregations of the holy Catholic and universal church ; and besides these, there was also another sort of communicatory letters, granted by the bishops and governors of churches, to such of their members as traveled, called by Tertullian, “ the communication of peace, the title of brotherhood, and the

common mark of hospitality ;” by virtue whereof, they were admitted to communicate in all churches through which they passed ; and which is yet farther observable, if it happened that a bishop in his travels came to a strange church which was not his own, he was for the testification of their union and mutual society, permitted by the bishop of that church to consecrate the sacramental elements of the Lord’s supper, as Polycarp did at Rome, by the consent of Anicetus the then bishop of that church.

Many other methods were also made use of, to preserve the harmony and communion between particular churches, which I shall wholly omit, and content myself with the brief mentioning of one or two more relating to their discipline, which are more particularly assented to by this article ; one whereof is, that although there might be a disagreement in some lesser and inferior points, yet they still retained peace and order ; and one church did not imperiously claim and exercise a jurisdiction over another ; but, whatsoever was regularly and according to form performed in one church, was allowed to be valid and obligatory by all others ; whosoever was baptized, ordained, or the like, in one church, was not obliged to receive those things *de novo*, if his

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But having thus briefly explained the terms of this clause, *The communion of saints*, and shewn some of the methods used by the ancients, to continue and promote their society and communion, I shall in the next place more particularly enquire into the occasion of its being inserted in the creed, and shew what was chiefly and more particularly designed thereby.

Now, as it hath been said before, the introduction of this clause was occasioned by the Donatists, who although orthodox in matters of faith and doctrine, yet by reason of a quarrel at the election of Cecilian to the bishopric of Carthage, about the end of the tenth persecution, engaged themselves in a long, violent, and deplorable schism; arriving to that height of pride, uncharitableness and faction, as to affirm their party, which was confined within the bounds of Africa, and rejected by all transmarine churches, who were the greatest part of the universal one, to be only and solitarily the one holy Catholic church; and that all others were without its pales and limits, having no right to administer any of the institutions thereof; that whatsoever they performed, were invalidities and mere nullities. Upon which account, they most schismatically and unchristianlike, proceeded to

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re-baptize, and to perform every thing *de novo* upon those who revolted from the Catholic church unto their narrow-hearted sect ; thus proudly and unjustifiably cutting off all other churches from their society and union, whilst other churches most justly rejected them from their fellowship and communion. In opposition unto which, this clause of *the communion of saints* was inserted in the creed ; whereby these two things were declared, viz, the mark and the property of true particular churches, that on the one hand, a sign to know a regular particular church by, is entertaining of communion with it by other churches ; and that on the other hand, it is the property and practice of such a particular church, to maintain all regular communion and fellowship with others ; of both which I shall briefly discourse.

First, this clause may be considered as a mark or sign by which to know a regular particular church, that such an one must be esteemed so to be, which is acknowledged as such by the other particular churches and members of the Catholic and universal one ; a sufficient ground for which interpretation, is in the conference of St. Austin with Fortunius a bishop of the Donatists, who, with the rest of his faction, excluded all the orthodox from being members of the Catholic church, limit-

ing the bounds of it by their own party, who were all confined within the borders of Africa ; for which reason, saith St. Austin, I asked him, “ which was the church ? Whether that which according to the prediction of the holy scriptures, should spread itself throughout the whole earth, or that which a small part of Africa should contain ? ” Unto which, he first endeavored to assert, that their communion was throughout the whole earth. Unto which St. Austin replies, “ that the easiest way to conclude that question, was for each party to produce their communicatory letters from other churches.” In pursuance whereof, Fortunianus produced a certain book, wherein he said, was contained a letter from the council of Sardis to the bishops of the Donatist’s communion in Africa ; which letter being read, there was found in it the name of Donatus amongst the other bishops, to whom it was directed ; upon which St. Austin asked him, Whether this Donatus was the same with him from whom they received his name ? For it might be, that he was a bishop of another heresy, seeing the name of Africa is not so much as mentioned in the letter ; adding moreover, that it could not be proved that it was this Donatus, since it could not be made out, that this letter was sent to the African churches ; for although Donatus be an African name, yet

one of another country might be called so also, or an African of that name might be a bishop elsewhere. Besides, supposing that this letter had been really sent to Donatus the schismatical bishop in Africa, this would be no proof of the Catholic churches communion with, and acknowledgment of them, seeing the members of that council did visibly incline to the Arian faction, and as such were resisted and opposed both by Athanasius bishop of Alexandria, and Julius bishop of Rome. From all which, as also from other passages of the said father, which I might farther cite, it is most clear, that in contradiction to the Donatists, who were rejected from the fellowship of other churches, *the communion of saints*, or the communicatory letters from other churches, and the rest of the methods and tokens of union then used, were esteemed as marks and signs of a particular church, that was regularly framed and constituted.

But secondly, I think, that in contradiction to the same heretics, this clause is rather to be understood, as expressing and declaring the quality, property, and practice of a particular church, regularly constituted and governed. The Donatists arrived to that height of pride, impudence, and uncharitableness, as to unchurch all other churches besides themselves, affirming, that those of their own party, who

were confined to a little part of Africa, were alone the one holy Catholic church ; and that for all the other churches both of Europe and Asia, as well as of the other parts of Africa, they were not churches of Jesus Christ, but synagogues of Satan ; for which reason, they asserted all their ordinances and administrations to be mere nulities, that their baptisms, ordinations, and every thing else, were all invalid and of no worth. In consequence whereof they performed every thing *de novo* on those who revolted to them from the Catholic church, avowedly renouncing all communion and fellowship with every church which was not of their party and faction. Wherefore in opposition to these proud opinions and schismatical practices, it is very probable that the *communion of saints* was added as an explanatory clause of *the holy Catholic church*, to signify unto us thereby, that though there was but one universal church, yet the particular churches and members thereof, maintained a strict union and correspondence with each other ; that whatsoever was regularly performed in one church, was esteemed valid and obligatory by all others ; or, that though the universal church was necessarily divided into many particulars, yet the Christian unity was not thereby destroyed, but was still preserved by their reciprocal agreement and communi-

on ; consonant whereunto, St. Austin writes against these schismatics, that “ the Christian unity, is not divided, because the world is divided into several kingdoms, seeing in every place where there are Christians, the Catholic church is found.” And in another place, the said father seriously addresses himself to the Donatistical laity, beseeching them not to be held any longer in their factious and uncharitable practices by the slight and cunning of their teachers, but to return to the communion of the Catholic church, from whence they had schismatically separated themselves ; “ the holy scriptures, saith he, mention the place where the church should begin, viz. at Jerusalem ; from whence it should go out to the ends of the earth. Turn over the sacred writings, and you shall find, that from Jerusalem it spread itself into places far and near. The names of the places and cities are expressed and known, wherein the church of Christ was founded by the labours of the apostles ; from whom some of them received epistles ; “ which epistles, saith he, they themselves, that is the clergy of the Donatists, read in your congregations, and yet will not communicate with the churches of those places and cities who received those epistles.” After which, the said father elegantly introduces the apostolical churches, expostulating with the Donatists for their un-

charitable refusal to hold communion with them. "Let, saith he, the churches unto whom the blessed apostle Peter wrote, of Asia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and the other Eastern parts, speak, and they will say, O ye, party of Donatus, we know not what you say; why will ye not communicate with us? If Cecilian hath done any evil, why must it prejudice us? Let the seven oriental churches also speak, unto whom the apostle John wrote, of Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and Pergamus, and they will say, what have we done unto you, brethren? Why will not you Christians have peace with Christians? Why will you annul in us the common sacraments? Let also the churches unto whom the apostle Paul writ, of Rome, Corinth, Philippi, Colosse and Thessalonica, speak, and they will say, You, brethren of the party of Donatus daily read the epistles sent to us, in which the apostle saluted us by the name of peace, saying, Grace and peace be unto you, from God the father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ; wherefore then have ye learned peace by reading it in our epistles, and yet will not maintain it with us?" And after the same manner, the said father might have represented all the other parts of the Catholic church, reasoning with the Do-

nazists for their pride and folly in refusing to hold communion with them ; it being an horrid piece of arrogance to limit the church to their own party, and an intolerable act of schism, to require the reiteration of baptism and other administrations (which are to be received but once) on those who were to be admitted into their church, as if their former baptism, &c. had been vain, wholly insignificant, and nothing at all.

Wherefore that such schismatical notions and practices, so destructive of Christian charity, and subversive of the unity of the Catholic church, might be repressed and contradicted, it is most probable, that the *communion of saints* was added in the creed as an appendix to, or explanation of *the holy Catholic church* ; by which it was intended to declare, That although there be several particular churches and congregations throughout the face of the earth, yet that there ought to be a communion & correspondence between them, as far as is necessary, possible and convenient ; that whatsoever is regularly performed and determined in one, either as to acts of worship or discipline, must be allowed by all others to be valid and good, seeing particular churches are no other than so many distinct limbs, members, or parts of the Catholic and universal one.

C H A P. VII.

A brief explication of the forgiveness of sins ; not constantly repeated in the creed till the days of Cyprian, though sometimes expressed, and always supposed from the very beginning of Christianity. Two interpretations are given thereof, a primary, and a secondary one. To have a clear idea of the primary one, which respects sins committed before baptism, it will be necessary to reflect on the great wickedness of the world before the publication of the gospel ; by means whereof they were under guilt, which the heathens knew to be the light of nature, but could not tell how to remove it. The Jews had no universal assurance of the pardon of sins : wherefore the apostles were sent forth to reveal an infallible way for the obtaining it, viz. by believing, and being baptized ; which is proved to be the primary sense of this article, always supposed, or else expressed in the creed from the very first preaching of the gospel, viz. that all past sins are for the sake of Christ, remitted to all penitential believers at baptism : first, that our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ : secondly, that the time of their forgiveness is at baptism. Remission of sins ascribed to baptism, which is always to be understood with due regards to the qualifications of the persons baptized. Why sins are said to be forgiven at baptism. The secondary sense of this article, respected sins committed after baptism. The rigorous notions of the Basalidians, Montanists, but especially of the Novatians.

who denied the pardon of God. The resurrection of the body is in some creeds the last article, and may be considered in conjunction with the resurrection of our Saviour. The resurrection from the dead being a necessary point of our religion. In the Greek and Latin creeds, as also in the modern French and Dutch, it is the resurrection of the flesh. Several heretics would equivocatingly assent to the resurrection of the body, who denied that the same fleshly substance should rise again. Against whom it was emphatically inserted in the creed, that there should be the resurrection of the flesh ; that is, that the very same fleshly and material body should rise again, tho' the qualities thereof shall be changed and altered. Life everlasting diversly placed in the ancient creeds, pertinently put at the end of the apostles, because it is the end of our faith, and the determination of every man to his proper place. The Gnostics affirmed, that the greatest part of mankind should be annihilated at the day of judgment, against whom, it is declared by this article, that after that there will be life everlasting ; wherein is included, the eternal misery of the damned, and the everlasting happiness of the blessed.

THE next article that in order follows to be enquired into, is *the forgiveness of sins* ; the terms whereof are so plain and easy, as that they scarce need any explication at all. Wherefore, that which I understand by it, is

in brief no other than this, that God for the sake of Christ; will freely remit and forgive all manner and kind of sins, and release their obligation to punishment, unto all such as shall unfeignedly repent and believe the gospel; wherein I insert the sake of Christ, as also repentance, faith, and receiving of the gospel, as a cause and conditions of the remission of sins, for reasons which will hereafter follow.

As for the time of the constant repetition of this article in the creed, it was not till the days of Cyprian, seeing it is not in any of the creeds of Irénæus, Tertullian or Origen, but is first of all to be found in a creed of the fore-mentioned father; after which, it is generally to be met with in all succeeding creeds, which was no doubt, occasioned by the severe and rigorous notions of the Basilidians, Montanists, but especially of the Novatians, as I shall hereafter shew.

But, though this article was not constantly demanded with the other parts of the creed at baptism, till the days of Cyprian, yet long before his time, even from the promulgation of the gospel, it was always supposed, and sometimes expressly mentioned to be part of the faith unto which the baptized person gave his assent; in which respect I may truly say, that this article is as ancient as any in the creed; and, that the primary sense thereof is

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to be fetched from the holy scriptures, and the circumstances of the apostles, and of the Jewish and Pagan world at that time, as well as a secondary interpretation, which afterwards occasioned its fixed and continual repetition, is to be searched for elsewhere.

As for the first and primary sense, which hath respect to sins committed before baptism, the best way to have a clear idea and apprehension thereof, is to reflect on the state and condition of the world before the preaching of the gospel, and the commission given unto the apostles with respect & reference to them.

The whole world, as is well known, was at that time drowned in impiety, profaneness and ignorance, fallen into the last irregularity and dregs of licentiousness, giving themselves over to all manner of uncleanness and abominations; by which sins, they were necessarily fallen under insupportable loads of guilt, and bound over to the inevitable punishment and vengeance of the Almighty, when he should come in his majesty and glory to render a righteous reward unto every man according to his works; of which the very heathens themselves were convinced, having found out by their natural ratiocinations that they were sinners, and obnoxious to the divine anger, as appears by their sacrifices, and other rites. But now, this was that which surpassed their

most raised intellects, how their sins should be forgiven, and their obligation to punishment by reason of them, be cancelled and annulled. They had indeed some general hopes of God's mercy founded on the common bounty of his providence towards them, in giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness, and the like, which they endeavored to increase by their sacrifices, and other religious rites and ceremonies ; but they had no positive assurance of the remission of their sins, and of the divine reconciliation unto their persons, being still obscured and bewildered in their notions and apprehensions concerning it, never arriving unto any certain conclusion ; that though the goodness of God did now attend them, yet that his justice, anger and vengeance, should not overtake and sieze them another day, and severely punish them for all those innumerable and abominable sins, which they themselves were sensible, they had most daringly committed against him.

And as the heathens knew not how their sins could be forgiven, and their persons absolved from the guilt thereof, so neither had the Jews any perfect and certain apprehension thereof. The Mosaical law had appointed sacrifices for sins of ignorance, and for small and ordinary transgressions ; by the regular

and conscientious offering whereof, those sins were remitted, and the anger of God appeased ; but as for greater and capital sins, such as murder, adultery, and the like, there was a sentence of death denounced against them ; for the reversing of which, the law had made no provision. Unto which it is not improbable, the psalmist David had respect in Psalm li. 16. “ For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it ; thou delightest not in burnt-offering ; the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, &c.” intimating thereby, that if the law had prescribed sacrifices and burnt-offerings for his enormous crimes of adultery and murder, he would have offered them unto God ; but, seeing that no provision was made thereby for the expiation of those scandalous transgressions, he would present unto the Almighty a broken heart, and a contrite spirit, hoping that those might prove acceptable and pleasing to him

This being then the condition of the world at the time of our Saviour’s appearing therein ; they being all, both Jew and Gentile, concluded under sin, and not knowing which way to free themselves from the guilt and condemnation thereof, the apostles were sent forth with full power and authority to invite them both to come into the Christian church, which they were now founding ; assuring them, that

they should therein receive a complete and perfect remission of all their sins and crimes, though never so innumerable and abominable ; the entrance whereinto, was by baptism, supposed to be accompanied with faith and repentance, when for the sake of Christ, all the sins of the baptized person should be entirely obliterated and forgiven.

St. Austin writes, that " at baptism all our sins are forgiven, whether original or actual ;" with which agrees the Nicene or rather the Constantinopolitan creed, wherein this article runs thus, *homologo, hen. Baptisma eis, apherin, hamartione*, I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. And the creed of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, which is, " I believe in one baptism of repentance for the remission of sins : " So that these and others explained this article in this primary sense thereof, viz. that all sins of whatsoever kind, are for the sake of Christ, perfectly remitted at baptism, to all the due and worthy receivers thereof ; wherein are these two things contained ; first, that our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ ; and, secondly, that the time of their forgiveness is at baptism.

First, it is herein contained, that our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ ; unto which consideration, the water in baptism, and the washing of our bodies therewith, direct

us, since it is impossible that the sprinkling of that should purge away the stain and guilt of sin, in any other manner, than as it hath reference to, and is a representation of the blood of the lamb of God, which was spilt to take away the sins of the world: for, water under the evangelical dispensation, is in itself no more available to the purifying of the conscience and the pacifying divine wrath, than the blood of bulls and goats was under the Mosaical and legal economy; of which the apostle expressly saith, [Heb. x. 34.] "that it was not possible they should take away sins." Wherefore, the apostles and primitive doctors preached remission of sins through the blood of Christ, as the alone remedy of fallen mankind, as is to be seen from the precedent quotations: unto which many more might be added, as that of Acts v. 31. where St. Peter and the rest of the apostles affirm in their speech to the council, "that God had exalted Jesus with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins;" and that of Ephes. i. 7. "that we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins:" and many other such like texts might be easily enumerated, directing us to this necessary and fundamental truth, that the blood of Christ typified by the water of baptism, is the alone cause of the remission

of our sins and trespasses ; which is not much different from the exposition given by Petrus Chrysologus of this article, which is, “ that he pardons himself who trusteth that his sins can be remitted through Jesus Christ.”

But, secondly, there is farther to be considered the time of the forgiveness of sins, which, by the Constantinopolitan or Nicene creed, is positively said to be at baptism ; “ I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins :” and by the apostles creed is supposed to be, seeing this article was then assented to, by which the person to be baptized did declare, that he firmly believed that by the virtue of the blood of Christ, all his sins should be washed away by the sacramental water : and, the very end for which persons were baptized, was, that their iniquities might be pardoned, according unto the exhortation of St. Peter to the convinced Jews, [Acts ii. 38.] “ repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins.” From whence it comes, that forgiveness of sins, and other suchlike noble epithets and appellations, are frequently attributed by the fathers unto baptism ; as by Tertullian, it is called “ a washing away of our sins, a salvation into eternal life, a dissolution of death, a taking away of guilt, and consequently of punishment also ;” by Clemens Alexandrinus, “ grace, illumina-

tion, perfection ;" by Dionysius Alexandrianus, " a purgation from the filth of old and impure heaven, a participation of adoption and grace ;" by Justin Martyr " regeneration, that being no longer children of ignorance, but of election and knowledge, we obtain the forgiveness of our past sins in the water ;" and many other such like appellations are every where to be met with in the writings of the fathers : by which we must not imagine, that they apprehended baptism of itself, without any regard to the qualification of its subject, to be sufficient and effectual for the blotting out of sin, and the pardoning of iniquity, but their meaning was, that whosoever was evangelically prepared for that ordinance by a sincere repentance and an unfeigned faith, unto him, and him alone, was baptism efficacious to the remitting and washing away of his sins and crimes ; according to that of our Saviour, [Mark xvi. 16.] " he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved ;" and that of St. Peter, [Acts ii. 38.] " repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins : " in which texts faith and repentance are made necessary ingredients of effectual and saving baptism. For, as Justin Martyr well reasons, " what profit is there in that baptism, which only makes the flesh and body shining ? Baptize, or wash the

soul from anger and covetousness, from envy and hatred, and then the body is clean."

Simon Magus, as Origen observes, "was baptized, and yet was not washed for salvation." As it was not the water but the blood of Christ which washed away sins in baptism, so neither were the sins of any washed away thereby, but of those who repented and believed. For which reason, the discipline of the church took care, that none should be admitted to baptism till they had by a convenient time of tryal given sufficient proofs of the sincerity of their faith and repentance; during which time, they were gradually instructed in the articles of the Christian faith, and endeavored more and more to amend their lives by an increase in an holy and godly conversation: after which, as Origen remarks, "when they had to the utmost of their power lived better, then they were initiated in the Christian mysteries."

The antecedents unto baptism are thus briefly related by Justin Martyr, "that whosoever were persuaded of the truth of the Christian religion, and would endeavor to live according to the rules thereof, were instructed by fasting and prayer, to beg of God the remission of their past sins, and then they were baptized." Agreeably whereunto Tertullian writes, "that persons to be baptized, were to

give themselves to prayer, fasting and watching, and to make a confession of all their past sins." And in his book *De Pœnitentia*, the said father more largely discourses of the state of repentance that was to be undergone before baptism. Unto which, and the other primitive writings relating hereunto, I refer the reader: seeing it is universally known, that none were permitted to be baptized, before they had by a sufficient time of tryal, given such evident proofs of their conversion and repentance, as every man according to the rule of charity, would judge them to be sincere and real.

But then, besides this state of probation, at the time of baptism itself, in a most solemn manner before God and man, they acknowledged and protested their repentance and faith declaring before the whole congregation that they renounced the Devil, the world and the flesh; that they believed all the articles of the Christian faith; and that by the grace of God, they would walk according to the rules thereof, all the days of their lives. Upon the profession of which repentance and faith, preceded by a convenient tryal of the reality thereof, they were admitted to baptism for the remission of their sins; which by the blood of Christ were in that ordinance unto all, so repenting and believing freely remitted and forgiven.

But, if any impenitent and unbelieving persons were washed with the baptismal water, it profited them nothing at all, but on the contrary, extremely prejudiced them by the aggravation of their guilt, and consequently by the augmentation of their woe: for which reason, Origen gives this seasonable and pertinent exhortation to the Catechumens, that is, to those who were in the preparatory state for baptism; "come," saith he, "ye Catechumens, and repent that ye may be baptized for the remission of sins: he receives baptism for the remission of sins, who hath left off to sin; for if any one comes sinning to that laver, his sins are not forgiven him. Wherefore, I beseech you, do ye not without caution and diligent circumspection come to baptism; but first of all bring forth fruits meet for repentance; spend some time in a good conversation, keep yourselves clean from all filthiness and vice: and then your sins shall be forgiven, when ye yourselves begin to condemn them."

So that from all the citations it is most evident, that the fathers esteemed repentance and faith to be necessary unto the efficacy of baptism, without which it can be of no saving profit or advantage at all; and that, whensoever they termed baptism "a cleansing or forgiving of sin," or the like, they understood it


solitarily and only with relation to those who were duly qualified by faith and repentance for the reception of it; as for the most part, they are in charity supposed to be, who are baptized in a church wherein discipline and government is maintained and exercised.

But, to return to the time of the remission of sins committed in an heathenish and unconverted state, which by the Nicene creed is expressed, and by that of the apostle's supposed to be at baptism; the reason thereof was, because every one did at the time of his baptism, solemnly renounce and forsake the Devil, the world, and the flesh, and entirely devote and consecrate himself to the worship and service of God, through Jesus Christ; and as a visible evidence, sign and token thereof, did on his part receive the sacramental water of baptism, appointed by Jesus Christ for that very end; whilst on the other part, God through the same ordinance, sealed and conveyed grace and pardon unto every person thus sincerely qualified and disposed: for the very end of this institution was, that on the one hand, men might testify their repentance and faith in Christ thereby; and that on the other hand, God might by the same convey and assure them of the full pardon and plenary forgiveness of all their sins whatsoever. For which reason it comes to pass, that by Cypri-

an and others, baptism and remission of sins are used as convertible terms, because in the former God was pleased to confer the latter on all those who were prepared and fitted for it.

But that I may conclude with the chief and primary interpretation of this article, it is evident from what hath been said, to be no other than this, that all sins whatsoever, committed before baptism in an heathenish or unregenerate estate, are in that ordinance for the sake of Christ, and the satisfaction made by his blood to the divine justice, entirely forgiven and remitted, unto all those who unfeignedly repent of their sins and believe the gospel.

But, besides this explication of the article before us, there is yet another secondary sense thereof respecting sins committed after baptism, which occasioned its constant and perpetual repetition in the creed; being therein placed to be an antidote against the heretical rigors of the Basilidians, Montanists, but chiefly and principally of the Novatians, who maintained such severe and cruel notions, as too injuriously reflected on the mercy of God, and the merits of Christ, and were extremely prejudicial to mens salvation, naturally forcing them to despair and horror. The Basilidians affirmed, "that not all sins, but only involuntary ones, and sins of ignorance, should be




pardoned. The Montanists denied the pardon of God, or at least of the church, to all scandalous and heinous sinners." But, those who were most noted for their rigor and severity, were the Novatians, who maintained, "that there was no mercy for him who should fall after baptism;" that is, either that God would not pardon those who should scandalously sin after they were baptized; or rather, that the church could not forgive them, and receive them into communion again, but must for ever exclude them from her society, and leave them to the judgment of God hereafter.

St. Austin observes, "that there is a three-fold repentance to be found in the holy scripture; the first, a repentance at baptism, when all the sins of the penitent are blotted out; the second, a daily repentance, which is the continued work of every Christian: for even after he is baptized, through the temptations of the Devil, the delusions of the world, and the infirmities of the flesh, he will have unavoidable miscarriages and defects; of which he is continually to repent, and to beg of God the pardon of them, according to the fifth petition of the Lord's prayer wherein our Saviour teacheth us to pray, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us: the third a more heavy and grievous repentance, performed in the church by those who are called penitents, who having committed adul-

tery, murther, sacrilege, or any other scandalous and heinous crimes, are excluded from the sacrament of the Lord's supper, lest by eating it unworthily, they should eat and drink judgment to themselves." Under which suspension they are continued, till they have given sufficient evidences of their repentance; by means whereof, they obtain a re-admission to the communion of the church, and unto those rights and privileges which by their miscarriages they had forfeited and lost.

Now the two former kinds of repentance the Novatians allowed, but absolutely disowned the third and last, refusing to receive again into the communion of the church those who had lapsed in times of persecution, or any other sort of scandalous sinners whatsoever, though they gave the most convincing proofs of their humiliation, sorrow and repentance; which cruel and unmerciful doctrine is with good reason affirmed by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, "to be most wicked towards God, and reproachful to our most merciful Lord Christ Jesus, representing him, as one that is implacable;" And, by Cyprian, to be "a severe impiety of heretical presumption; by which, the consolations of divine pity and fatherly lenity are shut against the penitent and mourning servants of God, who knock at the church with tears, sighs and



groans; so that the wounded are not admitted to have their wounds cured; but, being left without any hope of peace or communion, are thrown out to the rapine of wolves, and the prey of the Devil." For which reason, the said father calls Novation, who was the propagator and principal maintainer of these cruel and rigid notions, "an enemy of mercy, a murderer of repentance, a doctor of pride, a corrupter of truth, and a destroyer of charity."

The natural consequences of this heresy being then so dishonorable to God, so prejudicial to the church, so contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and so destructive to the souls of men, it is no wonder, that at the first broaching thereof by Montanus, or at least, at the revival of it with greater vigor and success by Novatian, the fathers of the church ordained, that the *forgiveness of sins* should be constantly repeated in the creed at baptism; to declare thereby, that not only sins committed before baptism were then pardoned to the duly qualified and disposed, but that also all sins perpetrated after baptism, even the most scandalous and notorious (the irremissible one against the Holy Ghost still excepted) were pardonable and remissible upon the renewal of repentance and faith, both by God and the church; that as the former would not exclude the penitent from heaven, so neither should

the latter seclude them from her communion on earth.

Now that this article was thus assented to, in contradiction to these heretical rigors of the Montanists and Novatians, is abundantly evident from the writings of the fathers. St. Jerom observes, that the Montanists and the orthodox Christians "disagreed in the rule of faith, or in the creed, and particularly in the article of the forgiveness of sins, for they shut the church doors for every fault almost; but we, (saith he,) read every day, I rather desire the repentance than the death of a sinner."

The author of the explanation of the creed to Damasus, wrongfully supposed to be St. Jerom, imagined by Bellarmin and Launoy to be Pelagius, thus explains this clause against the forementioned severities, "that if a man falls after baptism, we believe that he may be saved by repentance."

But above all, St. Austin in sundry places thus interprets it, as in his Enchiridion to Laurentius, where, after he hath mentioned the precedent primary sense thereof, he adds this secondary one, "that as for great sins to be remitted in the holy church, the mercy of God is not to be despaired of by those who repent according to the measure of their sin; but, in the action of repentance, where such a crime is perpetrated, as that the committer

thereof is separated from the body of Christ, the measure of time is not so much to be considered as the measure of sorrow; for God despiseth not a contrite and humbled heart: but because the sorrow of one man's heart is hid from another, and cannot be known by others, except by words and other external signs, therefore times of penance are appointed by the ecclesiastical governors, that the church may be satisfied, in which their sins are remitted." And in another place, where he cautions his readers particularly against those several heretics who denied the several parts of the creed, he directly levels this article against the Novatians, saying thereon, "let us not hear those who deny that the church of God can forgive all sins." And elsewhere, where he largely prosecutes this secondary explication of the article before us, "he wonders that any should be so obstinate, as to deny repentance to the lapsed, or pardon to the penitent, when it is written, remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works: and when the Lord exhorts to rise again by works, where it is written charity delivereth from death, that is, not from that death which the blood of Christ hath once extinguished, and the salutary water of baptism, and the grace of our redeemer hath saved us from, but from that

Which afterwards crept in by sin." From all which, it appears, that by the constant repetition of *the forgiveness of sins*, the compilers of the creed intended to declare thereby, in opposition to the Novatians, and others, that scandalous sins committed after baptism, were upon an unfeigned and sincere repentance, remissible both by God and the church.

So that from all that hath been said, we may conclude, that by this article of the creed, it was intended to be professed, that all sins committed before baptism, are at that time, for the sake of Christ, completely forgiven to all penitent believers; and that all sins committed after baptism, though never so scandalous and offensive, are upon the renewal of faith and repentance pardonable both by God and the church. Both which explications whereof were given by the bishops to Constantine the great, as it is reported by Zozomen, who relating the history of the famous cross, which our Saviour impressed on his fancy, commanding him to make one in the form and likeness thereof; farther adds, that the next morning the Christian bishops expounded unto him the meaning thereof, and from thence took an occasion to recommend unto him several of the articles of the creed; the last whereof was, *the forgiveness of sins*, delivered by them in this brief periphrasis, "that

there is hope of salvation and remission of sins, to persons in this life; to those who have not yet been initiated in the mysteries of the church, by receiving that said initiation, but to those who have been initiated, not to sin again: but, (as the said historian continues to write,) because there are but few men, and those most holy and divine; who can so do, therefore the bishops farther instructed the emperor, that there was a second expiation appointed by repentance; for God being merciful and kind, will pardon those who have sinned, provided they repent, and confirm their repentance by good works."

Having thus dispatched the article of *the forgiveness of sins*, the next that must be enquired into, is *the resurrection of the body*; which in the creeds of Jerom, and several others, is the last article thereof; *life everlasting* being not expressed, but supposed in the *resurrection*. But, seeing they are in the apostles creed, and in several other ancient ones distinctly mentioned, I shall consider them apart, and begin with the first in order, *the resurrection of the body*: in the explication whereof, it must be remembered, that whatsoever is related concerning our resurrection, may for the most part be also applied to that of our Lord's seeing his resurrection was the cause and exemplar of ours; and both his and our resurrection were denied by the

same persons, and in the same way and manner.

Now, as for the time of its being inserted in the creed, it is most evident, that the resurrection from the dead, hath been always part of the creed from the very beginning of Christianity; which appears not only from the ancient creeds, but also from the weight and moment of the doctrine itself, it being a point on which the whole Christian religion seems to depend.

For, if there should be no resurrection of the dead, the Christian religion would be a mere chimera and fable; and the grand attractive by which it was recommended to the world, would be no other than a mere lye and downright delusion: for, when the apostles went forth to convert the heathen world, the method which they took for that end, as we see by the example of St. Paul at Athens, was, [Acts xvii. 18.] “to preach Jesus and the resurrection;” that is, to reveal a saviour to them, who might redeem them from their sinful and lost condition; and, then, that they might engage them to a willing and persevering obedience in that Saviour’s service, notwithstanding all oppositions and persecutions to assure them of a resurrection, when the eternal majesty should by his son Christ Jesus, whom he had as a specimen and pledge raised from the dead, judge the world

in righteousness and render unto every man a suitable reward according unto his works.

Now, I say, if there should be no resurrection of the dead, this grand motive to the believing of the gospel, would be enervated and entirely destroyed; and those who have been engaged thereby to the embracing of Christianity, would be most miserably cheated and deluded; which would be such an odious and blasphemous reflection on the Christian religion, and the divine author thereof, as no Christian can be imagined to entertain: from whence it comes to pass, that the apostle Paul, disputing against some Christians in the church of Corinth, who denied the resurrection of the dead, makes use of this argument against them for the proof thereof; [1 Cor. xv. 29.] "else what shall they do," saith he, "which are baptized for the dead? If the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized?" which place of scripture by reason of its obscurity, is capable of many interpretations; but yet, I think, without any force of the words, this explication may be naturally given thereof, viz. if there shall be no resurrection of the dead, what will they do? Or what profit and advantage will they have, who embrace Christianity, and are baptized from the persuasion of the resurrection? How foolish and ridiculous is it for them to be baptized from the consid-

eration of the resurrection, that they may arise amongst the number of the just, if the dead shall not rise at all? Which is not much different from the Ethiopic version, wherein the verse is thus rendered; "else, why do they baptize? Is it not, that they may arise from the dead? If therefore they shall not be raised from the dead, why then do they baptize?"

But this is not the alone inconvenience that would follow upon the denial of the resurrection, as is to be seen in the forementioned place, wherein the apostle farther argues the truth and certainty thereof, from the prodigious madness and folly, which otherwise all Christians, especially in persecuting times, as those then were, would be guilty of; "if the dead," saith he, "rise not at all, [1 Cor. xv. 30, &c.] why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" That is, if there be no resurrection of the dead, why then do we for the sake of Christ run risks and hazards, and expose ourselves to all manner of torments, cruelties and severities? why do we daily encounter with men, who are more furious and savage than wild beasts? What doth this unnecessary hazarding of ourselves advantage us? Nay rather, doth it not harm and injure us? For if the dead rise not at all, it would be the wisest and most prudent course "to eat and drink, be-

cause to-morrow we shall die ;” to enjoy the pleasures of sense, and to gratify the carnal ease of our bodies, because we shall shortly die, and never live more to experience either sorrow or happiness, misery or felicity.

I might yet farther shew in other respects, the great weight and necessity of this article of *the resurrection of the body* ; but I shall wave them, seeing those already mentioned, sufficiently prove the belief thereof to be of the last and greatest consequence : upon which account it is most reasonable to imagine, that the apostles would not omit to require the assent of their converts unto this article at their baptism, seeing without the acknowledgment of this, they could not well be termed Christians, or professors of the Christian religion.

And besides this, there was yet something more, which might possibly oblige them to the constant repetition thereof, viz. the early and vigorous opposition which was made thereunto in their days, both by heathens and heretics.

The philosophers, who were the wisest and most thinking part amongst the Pagans, had at the best, but very obscure and uncertain notions of a resurrection ; whence the [Acts xvii. 18.] “ Epicurean and Stoick philosophers, who encountered St. Paul at Athens, when they heard of the resurrection, mocked him ; some

saying, that he seemed to be a setter forth of strange Gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection;" and as for the profaner and less considerate part of the heathens, they jeered at it, and derided it as a melancholy and idle fancy: and not only heathens, but also several false and pretended Christians, did betimes oppugn this necessary and momentous truth, as Hymenæus and Philetus, [2 Tim. ii. 18.] "who erring concerning the truth, said, that the resurrection was past already, and so overthrew the faith of some;" affirming probably, the same with those heretics mentioned by Tertullian, that the resurrection is to be understood in an allegorical sense, and that it is "no other than our baptismal renovation, wherein we shake off the death of ignorance, and arise from the grave of the old man alive unto God."

What trouble the apostles met with from these sort of men, and what difficulty they had to preserve the churches from the venom and contagion of so pestilential an heresy, may be easily gathered from the holy scriptures. Thessalonica and Corinth were two churches founded by St. Paul; and yet we find him by [1 Thess. iv. 13.] epistle tacitly blaming the former for their ignorance of this necessary point, and establishing them in the firm belief thereof; and as for the latter, though he preached amongst them a year and

a half; yet after he was gone from them; this heaven so infected them, that he was obliged in his first epistle to that church, to make a large [1 Cor. xv.] discourse; to prove unto them; and fix them in the belief of this great truth, that Christ is arisen; and that in God's appointed time we shall in the same manner likewise arise.

Wherefore this doctrine being so essential to Christianity, and having been withal so violently stormed and attacked on every side; both by heathens and heretics; to the endangering of the purest primitive churches; we may from thence fairly conclude; that the apostles would not omit to require an assent thereto at baptism, but make use of that most sacred tyē and highest obligation, to confirm and settle their converts in the belief of this necessary and fundamental article, *the resurrection of the dead.*

But, as the resurrection of the dead in general was primarily intended by this article, so also the kind thereof is farther declared, as is to be gathered from the very manner of its expression; which is not as in our translation, the resurrection of the body, but the resurrection of the flesh, as it is both in the Greek and Latin *Sarkos anastasin, Carnis resurrectionem*, being therein followed by the modern French and Dutch; in which word flesh, lyes a par-

ticular force and emphasis, which hath often made me wonder, that our English translators should employ another more general word in the room thereof.

Now, that which occasioned the invariable mentioning of the term flesh in the primitive creeds, was this, there were several persons who did acknowledge the resurrection of *the* or of *a* body; for in the Latin and Greek, there is no difference between them; but, they would not grant, that the same body which now we have should be raised again, but instead thereof, they imagined, that at the resurrection-day, there should be framed by the power of God, thin, subtil, areal bodies, whereunto human souls shall be joined, instead of those gross, material, fleshly bodies, which they now actuate and inform. Now against these persons, the fathers and governors of the primitive church, chose to express this article by the resurrection of the flesh and not of the body; that latter word being capable of more subterfuges and equivocating explanations than the former; of which, St. Jerom gives us an instance in the Origenists, who espoused this tenet; "they say," saith he, "we believe the future resurrection of the body; which, if it be sincerely said, is a pure confession; but, because there are celestial and terrestrial bodies, and the air and æthe

according to their natures, are called bodies, therefore they use the word body and not flesh; that whilst the orthodox hearing the word body, apprehended it to be flesh; the heretics understand it to be a spirit, which is their first evasion:" wherefore Ruffinus, who was accused of this heresy, in the vindication of himself therefrom alledges, "that to remove all suspicion of his being tainted therewith, he had frequently affirmed, that not only the body, but that the flesh also should rise again."

Various were the persons who embraced this opinion: It seems that in the days of Clemens Romanus, there were some who espoused it, as is evident from this caution of his; "let none of you say, that this flesh shall not be judged, or rise again; for as ye were called in the flesh, so shall ye come again in the flesh;" which notion was afterwards advanced by several others, but with the greatest advantage by the followers of Bardesanes and Origen, two of the greatest wits of their age: that the Bardesianists fell into this opinion, may be largely seen in the fifth dialogue that passes under the name of Origen, wherein this point is closely disputed between Marinus a Bardesianist, and Adamantius an orthodox Christian; in the beginning of which disputation, Adamantius lays down as the common faith of the church, "that this body with

which we are now cloathed, shall rise again." Whereunto Marinus replies "that it was an opinion very easy to be confuted, both by scripture and reason." From which foundations, he proceeds to draw several arguments against it; and from the latter, he makes great use of 1 Cor. xv. 50. "this I say now, that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" and of the 38th verse of the same chapter, "but God giveth to every one a body as seemeth him good:" upon which he remarks, "that it is not said, that this body shall arise again; but it must necessarily be understood of another, because it is said that God giveth that body to every one as seemeth him good;" which body they affirmed to be a spiritual, heavenly one, void of all gross, corporeal, or fleshly matter.

The followers also of Origen were reputed to be maintainers of the same opinion, affirming, as St. Jerom writes, "that after the resurrection our bodies shall be thin, airy, and subtil, losing the present fleshly substance which now they have:" a full account of which doctrine of Origen's, is epitomized from his writings by Methodius, wherein it appears to have been this, that the very same bodies, flesh and blood wherein we now live, shall not arise and see the kingdom of God, but

that in lieu thereof the Almighty will at the last day give unto us other bodies, which shall be thin, subtil, and spiritual, free from the material and fleshly substance whereof they are now composed.

Now against the abettors of this notion, and to prevent the equivocating evasions, this article was expressed by the resurrection of the flesh, and not of the body : according unto which, the general explication given by the fathers hereof, is, that hereby is professed our belief, that there shall be a resurrection of the same body that now we have.

Ruffinus was accused of being too favorable to this tenet of Origen's ; upon which account, it is observable, that in his short confession of faith, extant in his preface to the apology of Eusebius bishop of Cæsarea, for Origen ; he thus paraphrases this article ; “ we do not say, that the resurrection of the flesh shall be by a trick, as some calumniate us ; but we believe, that this very flesh in which we now live, shall rise again : we do not say one thing for another, neither any other body besides this flesh ; whether therefore we say the body shall rise again, we speak it according to the apostle, who made use of this word ; or, whether we say the flesh, we confess it according to the tradition of the creed : For it is the foolish invention of calumny, to think an hu-

man body to be different from flesh; for, whether we say it is flesh according to the common faith, or a body according to the apostle, that shall rise again, so must we believe, as the apostle hath defined it." And for the same reason in the creed, which he sent to pope Anastasius, to justify himself from the accusation of heresy, he thus expresses his assent to this article; "we confess the resurrection of our flesh shall be whole and perfect, of this our flesh wherein we now live: for we do not say, as some do slander us, that another shall arise instead of this, but that it shall be this very same, without the loss of any of its members, or the defect of any part of the body, unto which nothing of its nature shall be wanting, except corruption."

To the same purpose, Gennadius Massiliensis writes on this article, "there shall be a resurrection of all dead men; and if that which falls is said to rise again, then our flesh shall truly rise again, as it truly fell; and it shall not be, according to Origen, a change of bodies, that is, a new body instead of the flesh; but the same corruptible flesh, which fell both of just and unjust, shall arise incorruptible, that it may be capable according to its merits, either to suffer eternal pain, or to abide in everlasting glory."

The same explication is likewise given hereof by Epiphanius, "that we shall arise with this body, and with this soul, with our whole man, that every man may receive what he hath done:" as also by the author of the explanation of the creed to Damasus, wrongfully attributed to St. Jerom, "that we shall be raised with the very same members which now we have."

But here it must be observed, that although the fathers designed by this article to declare the resurrection of the self-same body; yet they always understood, that the qualities thereof should be changed and altered; that from mortal and corruptible, it should be immortal and incorruptible, and as it may be called become a spiritual body, that is, have no need of the supports of meat and drink for its reparation and sustenance; for at that time, saith St. Austin, the glorified bodies, "shall not only not be, such as they are now in their greatest health and vigor, but also not such as Adam's sinless body was in Paradise; which, although it would not have died if he had not sinned, yet he must have sustained it with meat and drink, his earthly body being yet animal, and not spiritual; but, then the man shall not be earthly, but heavenly; not as if he should not have the same earthly body,

but because through the heavenly gift, by the change of its qualities, not by the loss of its nature, he shall be fitted to inhabit in heaven :” So that, although they affirmed by this article, that the same flesh and blood should still remain at the resurrection, yet they held withal, that the properties and qualities thereof should be changed, as St. Austin writes in his exposition hereof, “ that this same visible flesh, which is properly called flesh, shall arise ; for the apostle Paul doth seem to point at it as it were with his finger, when he saith, for this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality :” and yet a little farther on in the same place, he saith, “ that those raised bodies shall be simple and shining, whom the apostle calls spiritual ;” or, as he expresseth it in another place, “ the bodies of the saints shall arise without any defect or deformity, as well as without any corruption, heaviness or difficulty,” being by the change of their properties fitted and prepared for *life everlasting* ; which is the next and last clause of the creed to be enquired into.

Wherein it may be observed in the first place, that it was variously placed in the primitive creeds, as in a creed of Cyprian’s it stands thus before the article of the church,

and "life everlasting thro' the holy church;" but it is most pertinently expressed by the apostles creed at the conclusion thereof, because it is the end of all our faith, and the determination of every man to his eternal and proper place and state; for the dead having been raised, and both quick and dead having received their sentence from the final and supreme judge of heaven and earth, all men both good and bad, shall go unto their appointed place, from whence they shall not return, but there remain throughout *life everlasting*.

The Gnostics, as it hath been already related in the fifth chapter of this treatise, unto which I refer the reader, divided all mankind into three parts earthly, animal and spiritual; the first of which and part of the second, they affirmed, would be annihilated, or reduced to nothing by the general conflagration at the last day, whilst only the spiritual, and part of the animal, should be made immortal and eternal. To obviate which opinion, as it seems most probable, the rulers of the church did in those days subjoin to the resurrection the clause of *life everlasting*, that thereby that heresy might be contradicted and warded against: from whence we find, that Irenæus a cotemporary with these heretics, and their greatest antagonist and confuter, doth in op-

position to their heresy, thus paraphrastically express in his creed the final determination of every man, that after the resurrection Christ shall render a righteous judgment unto all, "wicked, unjust, ungodly and blasphemous men, he shall send into everlasting fire; but unto the just and righteous, and those who kept his commandments, he shall give immortality and eternal glory:" and in another of his creeds he thus words it, "that Christ shall come in glory to be a Saviour of those who are saved, and a judge of those who are judged, sending the corrupters of his truth, and the contemners of his father, and his coming, into eternal fire;" and to the same effect, it is in a creed of Tertullian's, which he designedly repeats in opposition to the Gnostics, and other heretics of his time, that Christ shall come in glory "to receive the saints into the fruit of eternal life, and to sentence the profane to everlasting fire." From all which it appears, that this clause was levelled against the forementioned heresy of the Gnostics; and, that it includes the final and eternal state of every man, of the damned in hell, as well as of the blessed in heaven; that on the one hand, the wicked and miserable shall forever suffer under the loads of divine vengeance; and that on the other hand, the

godly and blessed shall forever live in the perpetual fruition of pure and undisturbed happiness : the eternity of both which persons and states are included by St. Austin in his explication of this article, that after the resurrection and universal judgment, "the godly shall happily live in eternal life, but the wicked miserably, without the power of dying in eternal death, because they shall both be without end:" wherewith agrees the creed commonly called the creed of St. Athanasius, that at Christ's coming, all men shall rise again with their bodies, and shall give account for their own works ; "and they that have done good, shall go into life everlasting ; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire."

T H E E N D.

N A M E S
O F
S U B S C R I B E R S.

P RUDDEN Allen,	Hanover.
Daniel Allen,	do.
Matthias Allen,	New-York.
Elihu Bond,	Elizabeth-Town.
James Bennet,	do.
Peter Bennet,	do.
Caleb Bonnel,	do.
Benjamin Brown,	do.
Stephen Barton,	do.
Eliza Burnet,	South-Hanover.
Abraham Britton,	do.
William Butler,	do.
Silvenus Bonnel,	do.
David Baldwin,	Cheapside.
Samuel Baley,	do.
David Bedford,	Hanover.
Samuel Ball,	do.
Stephen Ball,	do.
John Blanchard,	Morris-County.
Joseph Bruen,	do.
Jonathan Bruen,	do.
Elias Bruen,	do.
Simeon Broadwell,	do.
John Burnett,	Newark.
Sarah Baldwin,	Lyon's Farms.
William Ball,	North Farms.

Abner Baker,	Staten Island.
Job Brown,	Orange.
Samuel Newman,	Bellville.
Thomas Brown,	do.
John C. Budd,	Chatham.
John Bunnell,	do.
Daniel Babit,	Mendham.
Isaac Crane,	Elizabeth-Town.
John Chandler,	do.
William Cossen,	do.
Thomas Crowell,	do.
Nathaniel Crane,	do.
John Chetwood, sen.	do.
William Crane,	do.
Moses Chandler,	do.
John Crane,	do.
David S. Canfield,	do.
William H. Carman,	South-Hanover.
Isaac Crane,	do.
Jabez Cook,	do.
Daniel Camp,	Cheapside.
Abraham Carle,	Hanover.
David Corey,	do.
Aaron Condit,	do.
Luke Carter,	do.
William Campfield,	Morris-Town.
Thomas Carter,	do.
Aaron Carter,	do.
Isaac Canfield,	do.
Isaac Corey,	do.
Samuel Clisbee,	Newark.
William Clark,	New-York.
John M. Clark,	Rahway.
John Clark,	Springfield.
John Clark,	North-Farms.

Daniel Colie,	Chatham.
Daniel Crane,	Green Village.
Jonathan Conkling,	Spring-Valley.
Daniel Crane,	do.
Grover Coe,	Springfield.
R. B. Campfield,	Newark.
James S. Cannon, [two copies]	Somerset.
John Clark, Pleasant Valley,	New-York.
Stephen Crane,	Indian River.

Elias Dayton,	Elizabeth-Town.
William Dayton,	do.
John Donington, sen.	do.
William Donington,	do.
Jacob Donington,	do.
Thomas Donington,	New-York.
Elias Donington,	Bridge-Town.
Thomas Denman,	Cheapside.
John Dean,	Orange.
Henry Durand,	Springfield.
Matthias Dehart,	Staten Island.
Samuel Dehart, <i>Born May 10, 1750.</i>	do.
Robert Degroat,	do.
John Daniels,	do.
William Day,	Chatham.
John Douglass,	Hanover.
Lot Dixon,	do.
Parinenas Dod,	Crane-Town.

John Eddy,	Green Village.
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John Flintoff,	Elizabeth-Town.
James G. Force,	do.
Robert Forrest,	Hanover.
Thomas Fish,	do.
Isaac Fairchild,	do.

Moses Fairchild,
 Peter Francisco,
 Jonathan Ford,
 David Freeman,
 J. Flavin,
 Zopher Freeman,
 David Foster,

Henry Garthwait,
 Jeremiah Garthwait,
 Aaron Gening,
 Daniel Gening,
 Jeremiah Gening,
 Hendrick Garretson,

John Hendricks,
 William Harriman,
 Samuel Harriman,
 Benjamin Haines,
 John N. Heath,
 Job Haines,
 Isaac Hatfield,
 Jonathan Harrison,
 William Halsted,
 Dennis Hurley,
 Lott Hamilton,
 Isaac Headly, jun.
 Samuel Hedges,
 Joseph Hopping,
 Frederick Hedges,
 Jeremiah Hedges,
 Charles Hole,
 John Higgins,
 Job S. Halsted,
 David Hewing,
 Joshua Horton,

Hanover.

do.

Morris County.

do.

Cheapside.

Green Village.

South Hanover.

Elizabeth-Town.

do.

Morris County.

do.

do.

Staten Island.

Elizabeth-Town.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

South Hanover.

Hanover.

do.

do.

Morris County.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

Joseph Horton,
Andrew Hatfield,
F. B. Halsey,
George Harkness,

Springfield,
Westfield.
Staten Island.
Bridge-Town.

John Johnson,
Ellinor Johnson,
Jasper D. James,
Abijah Jones,

Rahway.
Staten Island.
Perth-Amboy.
Hanover.

David Kitchel,
Aaron Kitchel,

Hanover,
do.

Obediah Lyon,
Chandley Lambert,
Aaron Lane,
Samuel Lilly,
Joseph Lyon,
Luther Little,
Eliakim Little,
Joseph Little,
Jacob Lozier,
Thomas Lisk,
John Ladner,
Elihue Lindsly,
James Lockward,
John Leonard,
Squier Leonard,

Elizabeth-Town,
do.
do.
do.
Lyon's Farms.
Cheapside.
Springfield.
do.
Staten Island.
do.
Hanover.
do.
do.
do.
do.

William Miller,
Lewis Mulford,
David Moore,
Elihue Mitchell,
Nathan Morse,
Thomas Mann,
William M'Adams,

Elizabeth-Town.
do.
do.
do.
do.
do.
do.

Samuel Miller,	Elizabeth-Town,
George Mitchel,	do.
Alexander M'Whorter,	Newark,
Robert Morris,	Hanover,
Philetus Miller,	do.
Joseph Marsh,	Morris-Town,
Luke Miller,	do.
Joseph Muchmore,	do.
Nathaniel Meeker,	Rahway,
Jonathan Meeker,	Bridge-Town,
Barron Munday,	do.
John M'Comb,	Green Village,
Alexander Nicholl,	New-York,
John Nickolls,	Staten Island,
Gershom Norris,	New-Gloster,
Lewis Ogden,	Elizabeth-Town,
Moses Ogden,	do.
Samuel Ogden,	do.
Jonathan Ogden,	do.
Stephen Osborn,	Morris County,
John Ougheltree,	South-Hanover,
Abner Passels,	Elizabeth-Town,
Jonathan Parker,	do.
J. Periam,	do.
Daniel Price,	do.
Ralph Price,	do.
Tenrub Price,	do.
George Price, sen.	do.
Mathew La R. Perrine,	South-Hanover,
Jeremiah Price,	Hanover,
Jesse Price,	do.
Apollus Prudden,	do.
Phoebe Pierson,	New-Gloster,
Darius Pierson,	do.

James Pritchard,	Staten Island.
Garret Post,	do.
William Ramsden,	Elizabeth-Town.
Jowah Rowland,	do.
Lewis Rivers,	do.
James Richards,	Morris-Town.
Jonathan Richards,	do.
Daniel Robarts, jun.	Green Village.
Thomas Scott,	Elizabeth-Town.
Ephraim Sayre,	South-Hanover,
William Sayre,	Hanover.
Richard Spear,	do.
Caleb Swezy,	Sussex.
Daniel Simonson,	Staten Island.
Joseph Silvere,	do.
Sibyl Shepard,	Green Village.
Coraelius Swaim,	Springfield.
William Sampson,	New-Providence.
Abraham Tucker,	Elizabeth-Town.
Thomas Thompson,	do.
Nehemiah Tunis,	do.
William M. Townly,	do.
James Townly,	do.
Benjamin Thompson,	South-Hanover.
John Tapping,	Hanover.
David Tuttle,	do.
Victor Thibou,	Morris County.
Daniel Thompson,	do.
Elias Thompson,	Woodbridge.
John Francis Vacher, jun.	Elizabeth-Town.
Cornelius Voorhies,	Hanover.
Elias Van Sickells,	Rahway.
John Van Dyk,	Bloomfield.

Jesse Woodruff,	Elizabeth-Town.
Michael Woodruff,	do.
Abner Woodruff,	do.
Daniel Woodruff,	do.
Baker Woodruff,	do.
Enos Woodruff,	do.
John C. Woodruff,	do.
Lewis Woodruff,	do.
Aaron Woodruff, 3d.	do.
George Williamson,	do.
Nathan Wilkison,	South-Hanover.
Timothy C. Ward,	Hanover.
Joseph Winget,	do.
Linus Williams,	do.
Josiah Winans,	do.
Benjamin Winans, 3d.	Rahway.
John Wood,	do.
John Augustus Winans,	New-York.
Abraham Wooley,	Springfield.
Caled Ward,	Staten Island.
Flavel Woodruff,	Bottle Hill.
Jeptha Wade,	Green Village.
Beriah Wood,	near Spring Valley.
Jedediah Williams,	Connecticut Farms.
David Young,	Hanover.
Noah Young,	do.
John Young,	do.
John Zeluff,	Elizabeth-Town.

NOTE—*Titles of distinction might, with justice, have been attached to many of the foregoing names ; but for fear of mistakes, and to avoid giving offence, we have thought it advisable to omit them altogether.*

1. *Journal of Management Studies*, 1996, 33, 1, 1-14.

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997; 277: 1033-1038.

[illegible]











